

International Institute of Social History Amsterdam

Alphonse Merrheim

The Emergence of Reformism in Revolutionary
Syndicalism
1871 – 1925

Nicholas Papayanis



Martinus Nijhoff Publishers

ALPHONSE MERRHEIM

STUDIES IN SOCIAL HISTORY

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INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL HISTORY
AMSTERDAM

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8. N. Papayanis, *Alphonse Merrheim. The Emergence of Reformism in Revolutionary Syndicalism 1871–1925*. 1985. ISBN-13: 978-94-010-8781-0

ISBN-13: 978-94-010-8781-0

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The Emergence of Reformism
in Revolutionary Syndicalism
1871 – 1925

by

NICHOLAS PAPAYANIS

1985 **MARTINUS NIJHOFF PUBLISHERS**

a member of the KLUWER ACADEMIC PUBLISHERS GROUP

DORDRECHT / BOSTON / LANCASTER



Distributors

for the United States and Canada: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 190 Old Derby Street, Hingham, MA 02043, USA

for the UK and Ireland: Kluwer Academic Publishers, MTP Press Limited, Falcon House, Queen Square, Lancaster LA1 1RN, UK

for all other countries: Kluwer Academic Publishers Group, Distribution Center, P.O. Box 322, 3300 AH Dordrecht, The Netherlands

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

ISBN-13: 978-94-010-8781-0 e-ISBN-13: 978-94-009-5155-6

DOI: 10.1007/978-94-009-5155-6

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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1985

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The Netherlands.

For

HARVEY GOLDBERG

and the memory of

GEORGES HAUPT

with admiration and affection

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many professional associates, friends, and institutions provided me with assistance, service, and encouragement in completing this book and it gives me enormous pleasure to thank them publicly.

In Paris my research was made easier and infinitely more pleasant because of the many courtesies above and beyond the call of duty extended to me by Madame Denise Fauvel-Rouif, formally archivist of the Institut Français d'Histoire Sociale, and Mademoiselle Colette Chambelland, director of the library of the Musée Social. The staffs, archivists, and librarians of the Archives Nationales; the Bibliothèque Nationale; the Confédération Générale du Travail; the Fédération des Métallurgistes (CGT); the French section of the Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (Amsterdam); the Institut de Recherche Marxiste; and the Préfecture de Police (Paris) were patient, pleasant and helpful. Dr. Antoine Prost, formally my Fulbright adviser at the University of Paris, opened many doors for me to the French academic establishment and showed a lively interest in my work. Professors Bernard Georges, Jacques Julliard, and Annie Kriegel were very kind to grant me interviews when I first began research for this project. Dr. Jean Maitron welcomed me to his office as often as I had questions to ask him.

The bulk of the research for this work was undertaken under the auspices of a Fulbright Fellowship, and I can think of no more pleasant manner to have been introduced to France than through the Fulbright program. I also received two summer grants from the Faculty Research Award Program of the City University of New York, which made possible the completion of my research.

Several friends and colleagues were kind enough to read the manuscript of this work and make many valuable suggestions for improvements. For this service I would like to thank Deborah Perry of New York City and Arno J. Meyer of Princeton University. I am especially grateful to my friend Madeleine Rebérioux of the University of Paris for her comments on this work as well as her support for this project, and to my friend Patrick Fridenson, also of the University of Paris, who contributed important insights to the entire manuscript, shared with me his enormous fund of bibliographical knowledge, and lifted my spirits when they flagged with his confidence in this book. I also deeply appreciate the encouragement and

support of Mr. J.R. van der Leeuw, director of the Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, and the very important editorial comments made by Mr. Marcel van der Linden. I have borrowed freely several ideas from these people and their advice has strengthened this work. I have not always followed their counsels, though, and they are in no way responsible for the final product, any errors or shortcomings that remain, or my approach.

I should note that Chapters 3 and 11 and portions of Chapter 9 originally appeared in a revised form as articles in the *International Review of Social History*, *Le Mouvement Social*, and *Francia*. I wish to thank the editors of these publications for permission to quote material from these articles.

At the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where I began my work on Merrheim, I had the privilege and good fortune of working under the direction of a remarkable teacher who also became a friend: Harvey Goldberg. He knows how terribly important his intellectual guidance and moral support have been to me. The only sad note here is that my second mentor, Georges Haupt, died suddenly at the age of fifty in 1978. Ever since 1967, when I first met Haupt in Madison, where he was a visiting professor on leave from the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, he had been an impressive and inspiring intellectual guide, but more important a very dear friend. He is missed a great deal.

INTRODUCTION

This is a political biography of Alphonse Merrheim, a significant leader of the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) in the years between 1904 and 1923 and the most important member of the Federation of Metalworkers during the same period. He was born in the Nord in 1871 and became a worker at an early age, first in metallurgy than in textiles and finally once more in metalworking. In his ideological evolution he passed through a socialist political party and then converted to revolutionary syndicalism. In his peculiar fusion of theory and practice, Merrheim represented a form of revolutionary syndicalism that helps define the characteristics of that movement. He believed, along with other revolutionary syndicalists, that one day a workers' general strike would overthrow capitalism. But the syndicalist movement would prepare that eventuality by strengthening the workers through social reforms and by creating their class consciousness through education. Merrheim, however, participated so thoroughly in trade union activity and studied the organization of capitalist industry so carefully that he came to emphasize the preparations for such a general strike much more than the strike itself. The test of his attitude came on the eve of, during, and immediately after World War I; for contrary to the demands of certain militant and revolutionary workers who believed that the threat of war and then the dislocation caused by the war demanded a revolutionary response, Merrheim persistently stressed the dangers of such an action before the adequate preparation of the workers. His steadfast refusal even to respond to the strike actions of some of his own metalworkers in 1919 indicates the central contradiction between his revolutionary theory and reformist practice.

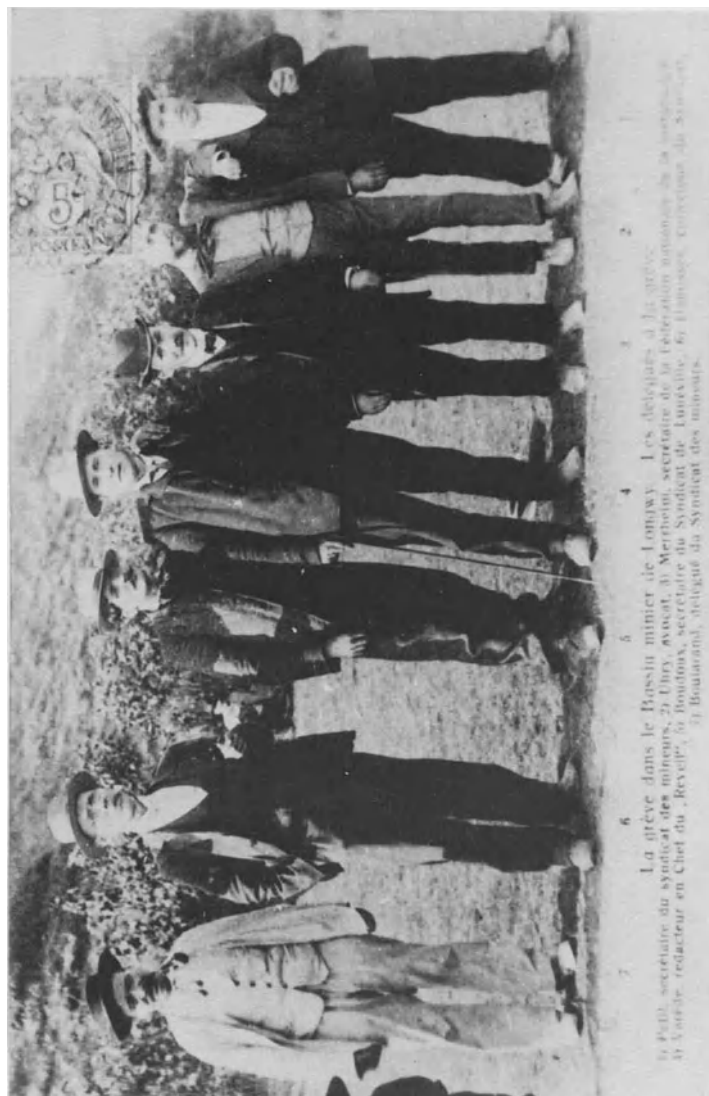
This book examines in detail Merrheim's evolution from a revolutionary to a reformer. In so doing it also sheds light on an equally substantial topic, namely, how a certain type of worker responded to industrialization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Merrheim is an interesting figure, too, because of his position in the labor movement, for it represents a unique focal point for the study of labor history. Merrheim entered the French labor movement in the 1890s and remained active in it until 1923. During that period he was, successively, a local union leader, co-secretary

of a national labor federation, and an important figure within the CGT. Never the secretary-general of the CGT, he was nevertheless the confident of the secretary-general from 1909, Léon Jouhaux. In addition, Merrheim was the confederation's recognized expert on capitalism and the person who did more than anyone else to shape the CGT's general theoretical revolutionary posture and antimilitarist attitude before World War I. At the same time that Merrheim was so active in the highest councils of the CGT, he remained very close to his home federation, and consequently near to the concerns of his rank-and-file metalworkers. Moreover, as a federation secretary, especially in an important industry like steel, he was quite sensitive to changes in industrial growth and organization and their effects upon the labor force. A tireless administrator, he also found time to contribute actively to the workers' press and to write an important book on the steel industry. In all these activities, he was preoccupied simultaneously with the organization and management of a labor confederation and federation, the world of the steel magnates, the power of the police and the government, and with the feelings and state of consciousness of the average unionized worker. Merrheim absorbed lessons and attitudes from several different angles, therefore, and consequently he forged a unique style, emphasis, and theoretical position in the CGT.

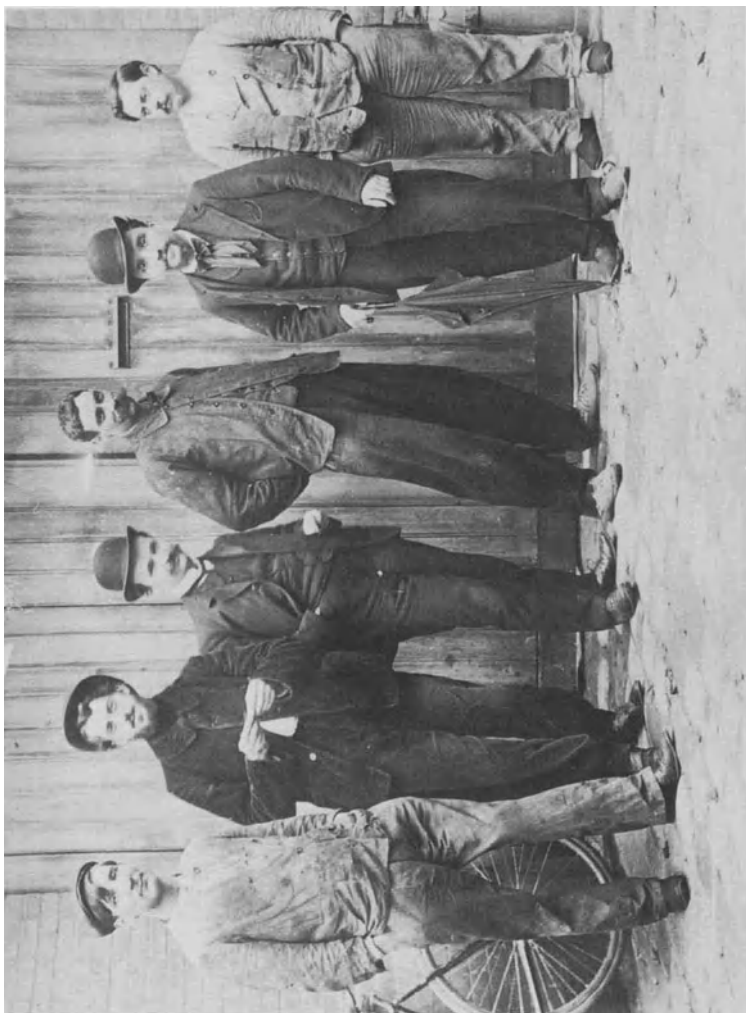
Many factors steered Merrheim toward reformism and the chapters in this book chronicle this development at length. Here it suffices to note briefly the main elements that influenced Merrheim's outlook. He became a union activist because of the influence of his earliest friends and associates and his own daily struggles in the labor arena. Theoretical considerations did not play any significant role in his earliest commitment to unionism. From the very beginning of his career he was a pragmatist. He was also a highly skilled worker in an industry that, ever since the middle of the nineteenth century, was becoming significantly more concentrated. The very size and power of the steel firms – they formed trusts, the *Comité des Forges* being the most well known – dampened his initial revolutionary ardor. So did the increasing specialization of labor, which made workers, he believed, less susceptible to revolutionary considerations. An expanding economy in the steel industry before 1914 and the increased bureaucratization of his own federation also contributed to Merrheim's reformism. Finally, his participation in strikes – the most dramatic and impressive events he witnessed – convinced him that workers needed a long period of patient trade union work and education within a reformist setting before they could attempt a general strike against the liberal-capitalist society.

Since the word 'reformism' conjures up different connotations, an explanation concerning its use with reference to Merrheim is in order. The

sum total of Merrheim's experiences before World War I led him to believe that workers were not sufficiently prepared to challenge the state or capitalism in any revolutionary upheaval, although they should continue to prepare for revolution through direct action for limited improvements. Success in a final anticapitalist revolution would not materialize, however, until workers equaled the strength and organizational efficiency of the capitalists, he believed. It is possible to see his advice as a pragmatic adjustment to reality and not as reformism. Along this avenue, too, consideration must be given to the fact that throughout his life Merrheim sincerely and tenaciously maintained a revolutionary faith and hope. But what is especially striking about him is that everything he learned about the preparation or revolutionary consciousness of workers, the power of the government and the capitalists, or about the efficacy of the CGT weakened his commitment to the practicality of a revolution in the foreseeable future. The major events in Merrheim's career only served to cause a succession of crises of confidence in his revolutionary resolve. Thus, when World War I broke out he had no reason to believe that the French workers would suddenly and magically overcome all their organizational weaknesses and educational deficiencies, become genuinely revolutionary, and bring down the state and capitalism. His persistent refusal to see any revolutionary opportunities during and after the war raises the question whether Merrheim's long habit of placing an enormous emphasis on organization, his negative estimation of the capacity of the working class, and his high regard for capitalist power had not combined to become the permanent filter through which he would always evaluate matters. I think that that is exactly what had happened. Pragmatic adjustment to reality in Merrheim's case turned out to be quite fixed. He could never openly abandon his revolutionary ideology. But he devoted his entire career to working for better organization, partial gains, and revolutionary education, although these goals ceased to have relevance for any real revolution. And herein lay the seeds of his own personal tragedy, namely, the emotional conflict throughout his career caused by the fact that he clung to a revolutionary goal, yet could never believe that the workers were organized or educated enough to realize it.



1. Strike delegates in Longwy. Fifth from left Merheim. (Centre de documentation de l'Institut de recherches marxistes)



2. Pierre Monatte, third from left, with members of the Federation of Printers. (Collection Chambelland)



3. *Georges Dumoulin and wife. (Collection Chambelland)*



4. *Léon Jouhaux (Bibliothèque Nationale)*



5. *Alfred Rosmer (Collection Chambelland)*



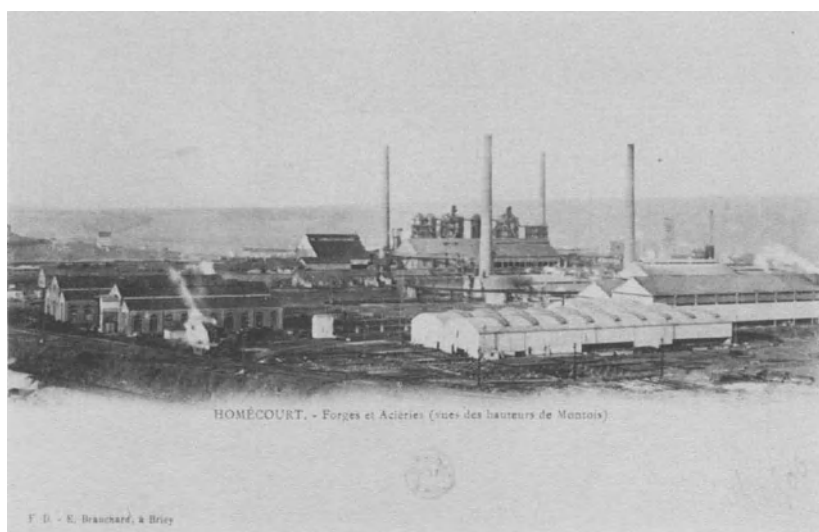
6. The Longwy basin strikes. The funeral cortege for Nicolas Huart. (Collection IISG)



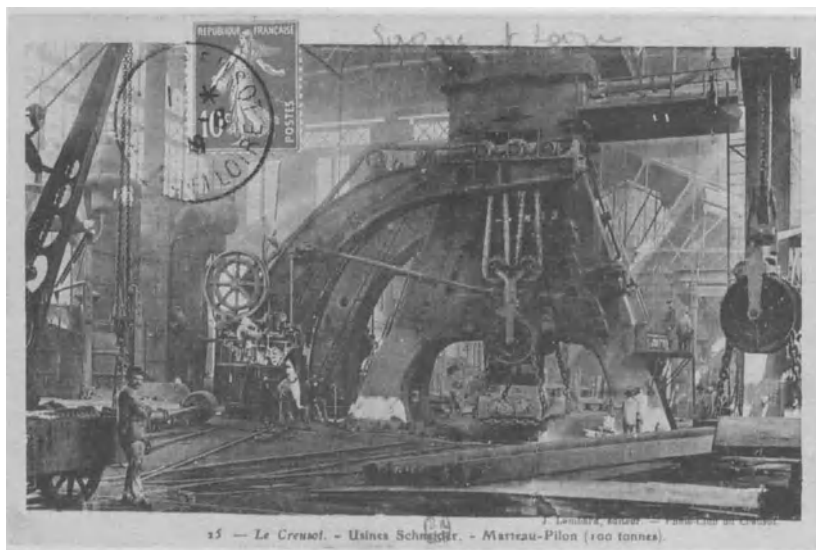
7. The Longwy basin strikes. A communist soup kitchen in Herserange. (Collection IISG)



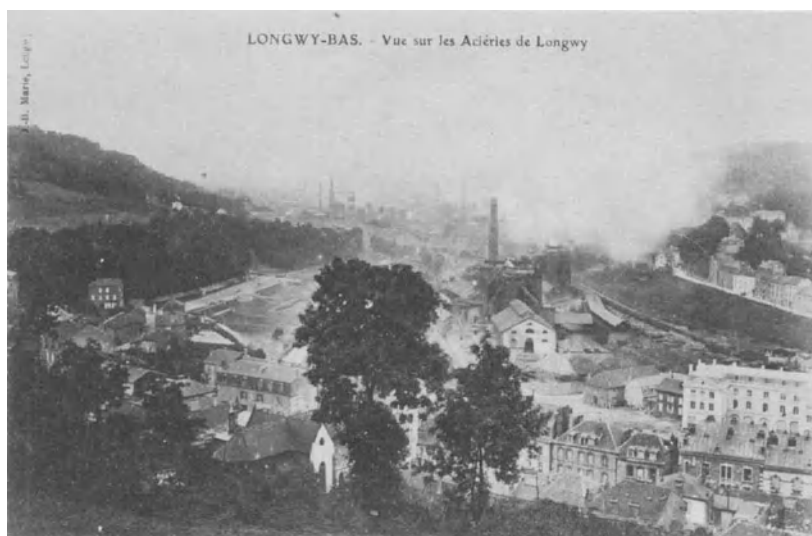
8. A major street in La Madeleine, Merrheim's birthplace. (Bibliothèque Nationale)



9. Forges and steel mills at Homécourt in the Longwy basin. (Bibliothèque Nationale)



10. Longwy, steel-works. (Bibliothèque Nationale)



11. Le Creusot, Usines Schneider. (Bibliothèque Nationale)

PART I
THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1871-1906

CHAPTER I

**EARLY TRADE UNIONISM. FROM THE FEDERATION OF
COPPERWORKERS TO THE FEDERATION OF
METALWORKERS, 1893-1904**

On May 7, 1871, Adolphine Lefrançois gave birth to a son, whom she and her husband, Adolphe Merrheim, named Alphonse Adolphe Merrheim. At the time Adolphine was twenty four years old and worked as a housekeeper; Adolphe was twenty five and a coppersmith.¹

Life for Merrheim began in La Madeleine, a city one kilometer from Lille, the great industrial center of the northwest of France. In the late nineteenth century La Madeleine had a population of slightly more than 6,000 people. The city was noted for its chemical works, textile industry, iron foundry, and coppersmiths' trade.

When older, Merrheim described his father's family, which originated from Dinant, a Belgian city, as a 'dynasty of coppersmiths'. He once recalled that his father was 'severe', especially in matters of work and honesty. And he also remembered that his father had once been beaten up by other workers over a labor dispute.² Merrheim's school years were very brief but this was typical for the child of working class parents. He left school when only ten to work in a soap factory, scrapping tallow from casks for ten francs per week.³ Merrheim remained at this job for a year and a half, after which the family moved to Roubaix. There, at age twelve, he became an apprentice to his father and when only sixteen qualified as a coppersmith.

At that time, also, he began to take night courses, where he read Victor Hugo and Alphonse de Lamartine. He attended plays, too, although he never mentioned their titles or authors.⁴ Working as a coppersmith proved so strenuous, however, that Merrheim became ill. The only course open to him at the moment was to take up another, less rigorous trade. He became a weaver. It was as a weaver that he joined a labor union and thus entered the world of the French labor movement.

Merrheim's decision to join a labor union did not spring initially from any intellectual impulse but rather was due to the influence of his earliest friends and associates and to the fact that the textile industry in the Nord was being unionized by Guesdist socialists. At the time Merrheim joined

the Guesdists, in 1891, he was taking room and board at the tavern of a Guesdist municipal councillor, Poulain. Merrheim often ate with Poulain, and the latter undoubtedly tried to convert him to socialism. The two men must have become relatively close for eventually Merrheim became Poulain's secretary.⁵ During this period, also, many textile workers in the Nord were simultaneously members of the *Fédération du Textile* (Federation of Textile Workers) and the *Parti Ouvrier Français* (POF), the Marxist party founded by Jules Guesde. In 1891, Merrheim, too, joined both these organizations.

Merrheim had entered the labor movement, however, at a time of considerable inner ferment and division. Jules Guesde was working to obtain a mass following for his party in part by trying to dominate the workers and their unions. Progressively, too, the POF was emphasizing parliamentary politics, reformism, and nationalism. At times, this Marxist party even outdid middle-class parties in patriotic and republican appeals.⁶ Moreover, by the time Merrheim had become a member of the party, it had established a resolutely negative stance toward the concept of the general strike that other workers' and socialist groups were adopting at that time. For the latter the general strike was a complete and spontaneous cessation of work throughout the country in all essential industries, leading to a successful social revolution. The POF's attitude can be explained by the fact that between 1889 and 1893, this party, which had started with a revolutionary fervor and intent in October 1879, began to expand and win local elections and offices. Many of its new recruits came from the ranks of the Radicals and the Boulangists.⁷ By 1892, the POF no longer hid the inconsistency of being a working-class party trying to win over middle class urban groups and peasants. It now seemed guided less by revolutionary or workers' needs than by electoral requirements. Furthermore, its electoral success and its tendency to stress the importance of nonworkers exaggerated an opportunist tendency in Guesdism.⁸

Arrayed against the Guesdists were other socialist organizations. The Allemanists, for instance, were strong partisans of the general strike and championed the primacy of the syndicalist movement over political parties. Blanquists and anarchists, too, believed in the complete independence of the syndicalist movement with regard to political parties. But it was the anarchists who especially attracted Merrheim's attention. It was undoubtedly their uncompromising hostility to capitalism and to political parties that appealed to him, since he had begun to feel that the POF was merely using the workers' votes to gain office. Emile Pouget, founder of the anarchist journal, *Le Père Peinard*, summed up the aims of the labor movement with what could have been Merrheim's motto: 'The goal of syn-

dicalism is war against the employers and not electoral politics'.⁹ What made the anarchists an effective alternative to Guesdism in the 1890s, was that they had begun to work within the labor unions, bringing their style and ideas to the workers. Along with other anti-Guesdists, they believed in the efficacy of the general strike and an autonomous labor movement. French workers influenced by such notions during the period before World War I are referred to as revolutionary syndicalists. By the 1890s, when Merrheim had become disillusioned with Guesdism, revolutionary syndicalism had come to stand for several well-defined principles: it was anticapitalist but its organization rested on a socioprofessional rather than an ideological or political basis. This had a great appeal for a worker like Merrheim who came to his anticapitalist stance more from his work experiences than from an initial intellectual commitment. Although revolutionary syndicalism aimed for revolution, it never rejected partial ameliorations for the working class. What mattered, however, was the method used to obtain reforms. Revolutionary syndicalists believed that the means to secure improvements must be revolutionary. Thus they posited the notion of 'direct action', by which they meant that the workers, through their own efforts – they sought no political or institutional assistance or intervention in their struggles – obtained reforms. If the ultimate goal of revolutionary syndicalism was the overthrow of capitalism through the general strike, the workers would prepare themselves for this eventuality through reforms obtained by direct action and a revolutionary education.¹⁰ It is significant that the revolutionary syndicalists were making a revolutionary appeal, and offering a revolutionary hope thereby, at a time of extreme economic crisis among Roubaisian textile workers, many of whom had expected imminent revolution.¹¹

All these currents affected Merrheim. Moreover, the POF's inconsistencies deeply troubled him. In 1906 he commented upon the events of the 1890s, and wrote that 'the union movement in Roubaix was completely bad' then because Guesdists constantly practiced reformist politics.¹² Worse still for Merrheim was the POF's hypocrisy. 'I knew you', he said to Victor Renard, secretary of the Federation of Textile Workers and a partisan of Guesdism, 'and I broke with the party the day on which, after having been taught to stuff my gun with ballots, I was asked to use my gun to force away another candidate'.¹³ It is true that he made these charges in the course of a polemical debate with Guesdists in 1906, but the example he used in his argument, rather personal in nature, points to events and incidents that made a lasting impression on him. Later in life, too, he expressed how profoundly moved he had been in the 1890s by the courage and tenacity of the several anarcho-syndicalist organizers he had met in the

Nord.¹⁴ The specific incident that made him quit the POF was, quite typically, very personal in nature. He left the POF immediately after learning that Guesdists had been instrumental in sending an anarchist to jail.¹⁵ The Guesdists, he concluded, were full of 'savage hate'.¹⁶ In 1891, Merrheim preferred to cast his lot with revolutionaries rather than reformers and with people who were more consistent in their concern for workers and more trustworthy.

Merrheim and Revolutionary Syndicalism. The Federation of Copperworkers

In 1891, the year he left the POF, Merrheim was just twenty years old. By this time he had returned to the steel industry. Fired by his youthful vigor and the example of the anarchists, he tried to form a revolutionary syndicalist copperworkers' union in Roubaix, but failed in his first attempt because of the hostility and rivalry of an already established Guesdist union of copperworkers in the city. He did not give up easily, however, and in 1893 he succeeded in founding the union of Chaudronniers sur Cuivre de Roubaix-Tourcoing (the Coppersmiths' Union of Roubaix-Tourcoing).¹⁷ A vivid account of its establishment is provided by Merrheim himself:

Some four years ago [1893], about a dozen of us met to form a union; we were sick and tired of merely submitting to the exploitations of our bosses and their representatives; moved by a deep commitment of justice and a fervent faith in the future we undertook the impossible for the sake of our cause. Six months later, because of our persistent propaganda, our numbers grew. Again, however, more problems, and our membership dropped from the original ten to three. We who remained, however, stayed strong in our rights, firm in our convictions, and never faltered in our duty; we simply repeated our oath to strive for our goal.¹⁸

His former Guesdist friends attacked the new union, first for what they felt was its lack of force, then for its lack of purpose. Nor did they spare Merrheim in their animosity.¹⁹ He stood fast, however, and the union survived, because, as he wrote optimistically, 'it derived its force from the material necessities of life; [...] it is the ally upon which we can count and which shall not betray us'.²⁰

Merrheim's efforts to organize copperworkers were not isolated. Albert Bourchet, a Blanquist and Lyon coppersmith, was secretary of the Syndicat des Travailleurs du Cuivre à Lyon (The Copperworkers' Union of Lyon).²¹ In 1893, Bourchet, along with a few other coppersmiths' locals in Lyon, had founded the Fédération du Cuivre (Federation of Copper-

workers).²² It was committed to a revolutionary syndicalist perspective and its immediate aim was to bring together all French copperworkers.²³ Lille was a special target because that city was 'the great industrial center of the Nord'.²⁴ In fact, a major organizing and propaganda drive by the federation in the region in June 1898 led to Merrheim and his union joining the Federation of Copperworkers.²⁵ The effect of this development was that Merrheim simply expanded his union activities and broadened his horizon in the labor movement, especially since his union, by virtue of its location in the heart of industrial France, became a key component of the federation, and Merrheim, in turn, became quite active in the federation. Sources still remain spotty during this period for his career, but we do get a few glimpses of his contribution to the larger labor arena. Along with Bourchet Merrheim participated in a major propaganda and organizational tour of the Nord in August 1898.²⁶ Also, he began to write for the federation's newspaper, *Le Cuivre*, and he attended its national congresses. He continued to participate in strikes in the Nord but now they had the assistance and cooperation of a national federation. In all these endeavors, however, he did not have a very wide field for revolutionary behavior or examples. Rather, the challenge was on the level of recruitment and organization. Merrheim was developing administrative skills, as the issues that took up so much of his time were relatively narrow. As he himself stated after the termination of a local strike in 1900 in Roubaix: 'I could, in my overall view of society, appear to be violent, but I have always advocated patience and perseverance in tactics'. He explained this attitude by noting that 'experience has proven conclusively that the revolutionary force of the masses always stops short before victory when it runs up against authority'.²⁷ By this he meant that workers needed a long period of preparation and education before the ultimate revolution and that he was quite ready to function as a responsible trade union leader and educator in the meantime.

Union with the Federation of Metalworkers

While Merrheim was going about his business in the Nord, the Fédération Nationale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de France (hereafter referred to as the Federation of Metalworkers), itself a revolutionary syndicalist organization although a rival to the Federation of Copperworkers, was trying to organize under its auspices all metalworkers no matter what their specialization. The Federation of Metalworkers, founded in 1883, was an industrial grouping whereas Merrheim's organization was a craft federation. The aim of an industrial federation is to unite all workers belonging

to a single industry no matter what their specialization or level of skill. Therefore, the policy of the Federation of Metalworkers was 'that it would be impossible to defend the workers' general interests by special craft federations [...]'.²⁸ Consequently, it campaigned vigorously to force craft federations in the steel industry to join it.²⁹

At first the Federation of Copperworkers repudiated industrial unionism and resisted its rival's unity efforts. So did two other craft federations in the steel industry, the *Fédération des Mouleurs* (Federation of Iron Molders) and the *Fédération des Mécaniciens* (Federation of Machinists). In turn, these three moved closer together to resist their common opponent. They formed an interfederal commission charged with establishing an entente among the three, and they also reaffirmed the superiority of craft unionism.³⁰ Out of this came an interfederal council, composed of two members from each federation who would meet every two months or whenever they were called into session by an individual federation. When the three organizations announced their formal union in June, 1900, they stressed that they would have 'autonomy in [our] economic and financial administration' while 'our propaganda shall be in common'.³¹ Basically they meant that they had joined together temporarily as a defensive measure against the Federation of Metalworkers.

But the Federation of Metalworkers persisted and offered some irresistible arguments for fusion. Its 1900 Congress of Paris stated that 'unity of action of the metallurgical organizations is absolutely necessary in order to struggle against and to conquer the employers' coalition, which is always closely united on economic issues [...]'.³² This statement alluded to the powerful employers' trust, the *Comité des Forges*, formed in 1864 and comprising by 1903 the fifty-six largest French steel companies. Such a concentration of capitalism, the Federation of Metalworkers argued, required that the workers unite their forces.³³ Jean Latapie, one of the secretaries of the metalworkers' federation, raised the unity issue at the Congress of Saint-Etienne in 1901 and reassured the craft federations about their special interests by pointing out that his organization had a 'federal base in which craft sections, grouped autonomously by profession or specialties, are united in the work of the metallurgical industry'.³⁴

Bourchet slowly became convinced. He sent no representative to the 1900 congress of the Federation of Metalworkers, as the latter had hoped he would, and the 1900 congress of his own federation ignored the unity question.³⁵ He did attend the Saint-Etienne congress as an observer, however, and afterwards suggested that the two federations undertake a study of the concrete measures necessary to achieve union.³⁶ Correspondance began to flow regularly between the two groups,³⁷ and in December

1902 Bourchet made the case for unity to his federation's Executive Committee. Unity, he said, would diminish administrative expenses and enhance propaganda efforts while the Federation of Copperworkers would still remain autonomous within the new organization.³⁸ Six more months of study, debates, and articles prepared the members of Bourchet's federation.³⁹ Finally, in April 1903, Bourchet announced that the two federations had united and would formalize their agreement on May 1, 1903.⁴⁰

Merrheim's Transition to the Federation of Metalworkers

These events at first surprised, embarrassed and angered Merrheim. He had hitherto been a staunch defender of craft unionism: in a debate with Joseph Braun, another co-secretary of the Federation of Metalworkers, he had openly professed an elitist view of the labor movement. In this debate, which took place in Roubaix in 1901, Merrheim charged that 'the industrial federations have always had the effect of destroying the propaganda force of the activists'.⁴¹ He thus expressed a common fear of craft unionists that industrial groupings would dilute revolutionary action and lead to reformism.⁴² Different skills, in addition, could not coexist in the same union, and his own craft federation was more effective than were the metalworkers in recruitment, he believed.⁴³ Whether this fear was rooted in reality or not, Merrheim certainly assumed that only the very talented and highly skilled workers could and should lead all others in the labor movement. He even applied elitist concepts to his own local union. The Executive Committee of the union, he once stated, 'is, in a sense, the tutor of the unions – its moral authority is indispensable for the union movement; its mission is to guide the usually hesitant march'. Since workers elected their own delegates to the Executive Committee, they should have no qualms about following it. The Executive Committee's 'role is to be the avant-guard of the proletariat', Merrheim concluded.⁴⁴

When his own organization joined with the Federation of Metalworkers, Merrheim acquiesced in the move, but he wrote:

[I] feel a profound chagrin; [I] feel ripped apart inside because my principles have been rejected; I consider craft federations necessary, indispensable, logical for my work of social, moral, and emancipatory education; I have worked so energetically for this, but [I have been] guided only by what I believe to be in the best interest of the entire proletariat.

About this he was very sincere, and he therefore swallowed his pride and advised all his rank-and-file to obey the decision of the federation. Personal feelings do not matter; workers should not 'have the susceptibilities

of *amour-propre* – something we rather strongly reproach the capitalists for – when the general interest of the proletariat is at stake'.⁴⁵ After some of his friends criticised him for his defense of the new federation, Merrheim only reiterated that no one could doubt 'the intentions of the comrades who have assumed the heavy burden of guiding us, of leading us to unity'.⁴⁶ In Roubaix he went so far as to chide his rank-and-file for not understanding how beneficial the new organization would be; union members, he charged, would have approved of recent developments had they attended union meetings more frequently.⁴⁷ This criticism was partly his way of getting out of an embarrassing turn-about. But he did manage to make the transition.

The New Co-secretary

The newly formed Union Fédérale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de France et Section Nationale des Travailleurs du Cuivre held its first congress in September 1903.⁴⁸ Bourchet, as head of the Federation of Copperworkers, automatically became one of the co-secretaries of the new organization.⁴⁹ Seven months later, however, he resigned his post. Ceaseless activities as a union leader, attacks upon his character by enemies, and ill health forced this decision.⁵⁰ It was a mark of the importance that Merrheim had gained in the Federation of Copperworkers that he made the official announcement of Bourchet's resignation. Interestingly, he said less about Bourchet than about his own conception of the duties of a union leader.

We must have the courage, all of us activists, to recognize that we do not always perform our duty, that we rely too often on the secretaries of the federation. We have to understand that the secretaries can only be sure and good councillors [...]. Is it so difficult to understand that for us, duty and devotion have no limit? The greater the difficulties we encounter, the greater our energy [...].⁵¹

These fine words were self-serving since Merrheim and a fellow worker, Marius Blanchard, were at the time the leading contenders for Bourchet's post. In June Merrheim won this election. He announced that he would follow the road upon which 'Bourchet has so valiantly [led] the Federation of Metalworkers'. He said that he hoped 'to be able to count upon the assistance of all the comrades' as they could be assured of his 'entire devotion'. All his efforts, he said, would be for 'emancipation', for the 'definitive liberation' of the metalworkers.⁵²

In 1903 the Federation of Metalworkers had approximately 16,000 members. Although not one of the largest unions in the CGT, it was in a strategic industry of the modern capitalist state. Election to the post of co-

secretary meant, first of all, that Merrheim would have to move to the Paris headquarters of the organization. He arrived in the capital on June 21, 1904, very much the provincial frightened by the life of the capital and the requirements of his new job, and also burdened with marital difficulties. In the Nord he had married Marie Claeys, about whom nothing is known outside of the fact that she and her husband were childless and that Merrheim abandoned her when he left for Paris. In fact, police had arrested him in Lille on May 29, 1897, and a court had sentenced him to jail for six days for having committed adultery.⁵³ To Paris he took with him the woman with whom he had had the affair; she, it turns out, was the wife of one of his friends. In Paris Merrheim avoided legal payments resulting from court costs and financial support for his wife by temporarily moving in with his uncle, also named Alphonse Merrheim.⁵⁴ This incident is a very rare glimpse into Merrheim's private life, something he managed to guard carefully and successfully.

As for Merrheim's public life, a short portrait exists of him from the moment he set foot in Paris. Pierre Monatte, a revolutionary syndicalist pro-freader, was among the first to greet Merrheim and later wrote down his impressions. Monatte was struck especially by 'the seriousness and timidity of Merrheim as he contemplated the task that faced him'; and 'sensed that he was fearful of being inferior to his job'.⁵⁵

What Monatte did not know was that Merrheim felt like quitting Paris almost as soon as he had arrived. The latter admitted that he had come to Paris with high expectations of taking part in a noble task of union work. Instead he encountered negative attitudes and low moral at the Bourse du Travail. He felt so depressed by this that every evening during his first three months in the capital he would go to the Gare du Nord 'ready to return to my provincial corner [...]'. He resisted this temptation, however, largely because he had met also some good friends like Monatte and some dedicated CGT leaders like Georges Dumoulin.⁵⁶

The first important event Merrheim encountered in his debutant year as a co-secretary of the Federation of Metalworkers was a strike among clockmakers in Cluses, a city in the Haute-Savoie. The strike broke out in May 1904; Merrheim's personal involvement began in July, when he arrived in the town for the express purpose of calming tempers between workers and owners. His connection with these clock-makers stemmed from the fact that his predecessor, Bourchet, had been instrumental in founding the first union of clockmakers in the area in 1901, and this soon included the Cluses local. This strike has been studied extensively elsewhere and need not concern us here.⁵⁷ It has some minor bearing on Merrheim's life, however, for what it reaffirms about his character and because it extended

his empirical knowledge of capitalist methods and the operations of French justice. It is of special significance that Merrheim's mission to the area was to calm 'the population, which was excited by the murder of workers'. Workers indeed had been killed – the owners of the struck clock-factory had fired upon demonstrators, killing three and wounding twenty – and Merrheim was, according to the police who followed these events, a 'very calm' person 'incapable of counseling a violent act'.⁵⁸ His only concern was to negotiate an end to the strike – which he did in order to avoid further bloodshed.⁵⁹ In short, his role in Cluses was to be a mediator and a responsible trade union leader, a task he accomplished successfully. In the process he also deepened his awareness that French justice had a class bias – several workers had to prove their innocence in court concerning charges they had set fire to the factory, while the owners were convicted for murder but received reduced jail sentences and within a year a presidential clemency – and that French capitalists behaved rather brutally towards French workers.⁶⁰

A year after the Cluses strike, Merrheim became active in a major strike of metalworkers in the Longwy coal basin. His involvement there represented a major step in his conviction that French workers were a long way from a fully formed revolutionary and internationalist consciousness. Chapter 2 deals with these themes.

CHAPTER TWO

**FRENCH WORKERS AND FOREIGN WORKERS. THE STRIKES
IN THE LORRAINE, 1905**

Lorraine du fer – this is what the French frequently call the region of the Lorraine.¹ Lorraine is the ancient and popular name for the departments of the Meurthe-et-Moselle and the Moselle. During the late nineteenth century, the area was the center of France's iron and mineral industries. The most important concentration of mines and iron production lay essentially in a basin between the cities of Longwy in the northern end of the Meurthe-et-Moselle and Nancy at the southern end. Traveling north along the Moselle river from Nancy to Pont-à-Mousson, then heading in an almost straight line to Briey and from Briey to Longwy and slightly beyond in an easterly direction, a person would pass by the many mines and iron mills whose names are etched in the history of French industry: Pont-à-Mousson, Auboué, Homecourt, Joeuf, Villerupt, Longwy, and Mont-Saint-Martin.

In 1878 there were just slightly more than sixty mining concessions in the Meurthe-et-Moselle. By 1903 that figure increased to 115. The production of iron ore rose in these same years from 1,287,000 tons to 5,282,000 tons and siderurgical production went from 229,000 tons to 1,887,000 tons. In the *Lorraine annexée*, the part that Germany stripped from France after the Franco-Prussian war, iron ore production was 11 million tons in 1903. During the same year, the output of cast iron in the Meurthe-et-Moselle represented 66 percent of the total French production as opposed to 20 percent in 1878.²

Such a large concentration of heavy industry in the Lorraine also meant a large concentration of miners and metalworkers in the area. It was these men who, beginning in the spring of 1905 and continuing to the early fall of that year, staged several large, explosive, and violent strikes. Most of the work stoppages were in the northern end of the basin, dominated by the city of Longwy.

Before 1905 there had never been more than ten strikes a year involving more than 1,800 strikers in the region, except in 1893 when there were 2,580 strikers. During 1905 there were twenty-five strikes and 7,355 strikers in the Meurthe-et-Moselle.³ It was these strikes that brought Merrheim to

the Lorraine as a representative of the Federation of Metalworkers.

The first strike of 1905 in the Longwy region broke out in the mine of Thil, owned by a group headed by Alexandre Dreux, a well-known steel baron in the basin.⁴ The mine was worked by approximately 300 miners and laborers, of whom 225 were Italian nationals, twenty French, and fifty German and Luxembourgish. The mean daily wage for an ordinary laborer was 4,78 francs. The 130 miners there, the skilled men who actually extracted the mineral, received 6,82 francs each day. On April 22, a group of workers presented the director of the mine with seven demands.⁵ Leading the list were the claims that a workers' delegate verify the weight of wagons as they left the mine full of minerals – a worker's salary was partly based on the weight of a full wagon – and that workers receive their wages every fifteen days rather than once a month. The remaining demands concerned such items as the right of miners to choose their own physician to treat job-related accidents, elimination of fines, and protection from any reprisals for participating in the strike. Missing in this list was any claim for above-the-board salary increases or reduction of the workday. In short, these requests were aimed at controlling the work process rather than augmenting material gains.⁶ When no answer was forthcoming by April 25, the miners, who belonged to the *Chambre Syndicale Ouvrière de l'Industrie Métallurgique de Briey*, struck the following day.

One of the first acts of the strikers of Thil was to appeal to the Federation of Metalworkers in Paris to send them a delegate. They did this despite the fact that unionization was generally weak among miners and metalworkers in the *Meurthe-et-Moselle* and notwithstanding the initial resistance of the director of the mine to talk to any union representatives.⁷ Even before the federation's delegate arrived, the strikers were joined by an Italian organizer on April 26. Tulio Cavallazzi, an Italian national, had been sent to France in 1904 by the *Società Umanitaria di Milano*, an organization founded to aid Italians working abroad. On the evening of April 26, Cavallazzi took charge of setting up a committee to distribute aid to strikers' families. On the very first day of the strike, also, the Thil union had asked the workers of the neighboring town of Villerupt to strike on May 1 and to participate in a demonstration from Villerupt to Thil. The latter agreed and on the appointed day some 4,000 workers marched.⁸ Everyone still awaited the delegate from Paris.

On May 4, Cavallazzi announced to a public meeting that a secretary from the *Bourse du Travail* of Paris was in Villerupt.⁹ What he did not know was that a secretary had not yet arrived and that, in reality, it was Merrheim who was on his way from the headquarters of the Federation of Metalworkers. Merrheim finally set foot in the region on May 7 and met

in Hussigny with Cavallazzi and another union leader, Paul Varède. The latter was a socialist from the Ardennes and was already taking an active leadership role in the conflict.¹⁰ Merrheim began to exercise his guidance on May 9, when he participated in the establishment of a *soupe populaire* to aid the strikers. The following day he and Cavallazzi led a demonstration, replete with red flag and musicians, from Thil to Villerupt and back. Along with Varède, Merrheim and Cavallazzi increased the number of their meetings in the various communes of the Longwy basin. They did so to mobilize public opinion on the side of the strikers. Matters came to a head when, as a result of ever-increasing agitation by the workers, troops arrived in Longwy on May 21 and immediately set out for Villerupt and Thil. On May 23 both sides in the strike agreed to an arbitrator. On May 24 the latter decreed that the strikers could elect a delegate to verify the weight of their wagons and that they could also receive their wages every fifteen days on a Saturday and not once a month. No other concessions were forthcoming and work was resumed on May 25.

Thus ended only the first strike in a long series of strikes in the Longwy basin in 1905. Throughout the summer and fall conflicts between owners and miners or iron workers broke out in such cities as Hussigny-Godbrange, Saulnes, Moulaine, Auboué, Micheville, Pont-à-Mousson, Longwy, Villerupt and Herserange. Quiet was restored in this strife-torn area only after a soldier killed a Belgian worker on September 12. This incident was related to a strike that the workers of the Aciéries de Longwy had staged in early September. In a meeting they held in Gouraincourt, the workers demanded the freedom to unionize, the rehiring of workers fired for strike activities, pay every fifteen days, and suppression of piece work.¹¹ The authorities, worried about the size of the demonstrations, sent in troops to restore order. On September 12, workers marched from Mont-Saint-Martin to Longwy, and it was during this demonstration that a blow from a soldier's lance struck Nicolas Huart, a Belgian working in the French mines, killing him. Everyone, from the government in Paris to local officials and residents to workers, was stunned by the violent turn of events. On September 13, workers held a large meeting. Varède was already on the scene and Merrheim, who throughout the summer shuttled back and forth from Paris to Longwy, took the 6:30 p.m. train from Paris and arrived in Longwy a little past midnight. The local authorities, fearing disorder and more violence, permitted the workers to march, and the minister of war, Maurice Berteaux, ordered an investigation. Meanwhile, the workers, led by Merrheim and Varède, formed an enormous funeral cortege for Huart. The two labor leaders accompanied the body to Stockem, Belgium, where Merrheim delivered a funeral oration. He con-

cluded by shouting, 'Huart, we shall avenge your memory!' The workers responded, 'Yes, we shall avenge you'.¹²

The show of public force and death of Huart, rather than leading to further confrontation, shocked the workers and broke the strike movements. On September 18, troops began to leave the region and this effectively signaled the end of the strikes. The workers had obtained some concessions in some instances but generally speaking the employers held firm.

The Causes of the Strikes

Both during and after these strikes each camp assigned its own reasons for the conflicts. It is notable that for the miners the major issue was control over the weigh-in of wagons and not salaries. Merrheim stressed this aspect of the strikes.¹³ Matters were not so neat, however, because for metalworkers wages were the major issue at the mines of Micheville, the *Acières de Longwy*, Senelle, and La Chiers, but not at Pont-à-Mousson.¹⁴ The owners simply blamed these conflicts on outside agitators. This accusation struck a responsive cord in a part of France that, indeed, had a high concentration of foreign labor. But the owners meant, too, that French citizens foreign to the Lorraine were trouble makers. It is true that most of the strike leaders, Varède, Cavallazzi, and Merrheim, were not native to the Lorraine.

In reality, the basic causes of these strikes were the workers' conditions in the mines and iron mills. One historian, Louis Köll, has provided the most complete record of the interior life of one mine in the Lorraine, the mine of Auboué.¹⁵ There were two work shifts in Auboué; the day shift began at 5 a.m., while the night shift let out at 3 a.m. According to a law of March 30, 1900, the workday in mines was limited to ten hours, but in reality it was much longer at Auboué. Wages for employees at Auboué varied considerably. Mine overseers made between 10 and 11 francs per day. Qualified miners could earn 8 francs per day. Miners' aids, the majority of the mine personnel, averaged 6,50 francs per day. Whatever the pay scale, wages did not go far, especially since such items as food were more expensive in industrial regions than elsewhere. In Auboué-center the cost of food averaged 10 to 15 percent more than in neighboring villages. To this must be added that the average work-life of a miner was twenty years and that he frequently experienced accidents and sickness. It was such issues that were at the heart of the 1905 strikes.¹⁶

French Workers and Foreign Workers

Complicating matters in the Longwy basin was that Merrheim and other strike leaders had to contend with more than the hostility between strikers and employers. Throughout the Lorraine strikes Merrheim came up against conflicts of nationalism between French and foreign workers, mostly Italians. The Lorraine capitalists needed foreign labor to supplement native workers in the exploitation of their mines and iron mills.¹⁷ From the 1860s, Italian, German, and Belgian workers arrived in the Lorraine in great numbers. These were either nomadic laborers lured by higher salaries or traditionally seasonal itinerant workers. Generally speaking, the first and second generations of immigrants to the Lorraine were easily assimilated. The same was not true for the immigrants of 1900, as the number of foreign workers coming into the area increased steadily from 1890 to 1913. During 1901, to illustrate, the total legal population of the Meurthe-et-Moselle was 483,840 including 36,984 foreigners or 7.5 percent of the total. By 1906, this population had increased by 30,144 to a total of 513,508 people, among whom were 44,608 foreigners, which represents 8 percent of the total. The 1906 figures break down as follows: the largest group of foreigners in the Meurthe-et-Moselle was Germans (17,782); followed by Italians (12,903); and by workers from the Low Countries (11,834).¹⁸

Merrheim's work in the Lorraine involved mostly Italians. These nationals tended to concentrate in the arrondissement of Briey, which was geographically the center of the 1905 strikes in the Lorraine.¹⁹ During 1905 the arrondissement of Briey had a population of 70,000, of whom 17,800 were Italians.²⁰ A high concentration of foreign, especially Italian, labor characterized this region right up to World War I.²¹

Italians, more than any other foreign workers, constituted the principal source of nonqualified labor in the Lorraine.²² Each mine and factory in the department organized its own recruitment program. During 1903, for instance, Pont-à-Mousson opened a recruitment bureau in Chiasso, on the Italo-Swiss frontier. Local owners also raided each other's labor force for workers. Not until 1911, when the Comité des Forges founded a collective recruitment service, did the steel and mining magnates cooperate in attracting foreign labor. Italians responded to the calls of French employers because of chronic unemployment and low wages in their own country. The Italian government and even the Italian church cooperated in the efforts of the French to attract Italian labor.²³

Once in the Lorraine Italian workers did not find milk and honey but disappointment. Wages and working conditions were not so attractive,

and, worse yet, French workers were not kindly disposed to the foreigners. It was the latter situation that especially concerned Merrheim. Part of the animosity resulted from the socioprofessional hierarchy that existed in the Lorraine. Basically, foreign labor was at the bottom of the social ladder. To take the Auboué mine as an example, at the very top of the professional scale were the mine's directors, engineers, overseers, foremen, and section chiefs. These made up 3 percent of the personnel of the Auboué work force. Below them were the skilled workers and miners, who constituted 7 percent of the workers. The 90 percent who remained were day-laborers and unskilled workers. Foreign labor made up approximately 95 percent of this last category.²⁴ These foreign laborers were housed together and apart from other nationals. Foreign laborers also worked together, separate from the French, and received lower wages. In short, Italians and other foreign workers stood out conspicuously from the native work force. As a result, 'French workers mistrusted Italians and even more other foreigners [...]'.²⁵

This situation translated into a great deal of tension between French and Italian workers, especially at times of social conflict.²⁶ In one mine, that of Godbrange in Hussigny, a French worker wrote on the wall: 'Long live France! Down with the donkies. Death to the donkies'.²⁷ By 'donkies' the anonymous writer meant Italians. Examples of nationality conflicts and tensions may be multiplied considerably, but one writer summed up matters when he concluded simply that French workers did not have a strong sense of solidarity with their foreign counterparts.²⁸ He could have easily added that the foreign worker also did not have a good record in this matter. However, since Italians and other foreigners working in France were somewhat vulnerable in the host country, CGT leaders like Merrheim had hoped that French workers could be more sympathetic and helpful, which they were not.

Merrheim, therefore, determined that a major part of his task in the region was to overcome the nationality conflicts. To accomplish this he tried to educate French and Italian workers to the harmful effects of the workers' divisions. In his journalism he emphasized how the capitalists took advantage of national hatreds to divide the workers. Meanwhile, the capitalists, on whatever side of the border, cooperated to suppress the workers' legitimate aspirations. The 'gendarmierie no longer recognizes frontiers', he wrote.²⁹ French and Belgian police concurred in the arrest of Varède in Belgium.³⁰ During the strikes of 1905 the prefect of Meurthe-et-Moselle had Cavallazzi expelled from France. French employers, Merrheim pointed out, were fond of attacking organized labor because of its internationalist and antipatriotic ideology. Yet it was the French capitalist who cooperated with foreign capitalists, no matter how friendly their

respective countries, to control the workers.³¹ Merrheim's point in raising these facts and issues was to demonstrate that the employers encouraged national rivalries to divert attention from the real enemy, the owners themselves.³²

In addition to his journalism, Merrheim also enlisted institutional support to aid the Lorraine workers. Following the 1905 strikes, Merrheim had the Federation of Metalworkers establish a regional secretary for the Lorraine.³³ This secretary would have primary responsibility for propaganda work in the basin. Unfortunately the experiment did not work well. The federation admitted that it had not adequately funded the regional secretaryship nor thought through its exact duties. Some in the federation also criticised the performance of the first regional secretary, Marius Blanchard. Consequently, the federation abolished this post and returned to a system of central control over regional matters. At the same time, however, it resolved to continue to pay close attention to the Lorraine.³⁴ Another tactic Merrheim and his federation employed to assist foreign labor was to cooperate actively with foreign organizers who tried to aid their fellow nationals working in France. Finally, Merrheim also campaigned on behalf of foreign workers at meetings of the International Federation of Metalworkers.³⁵

Despite these efforts, Merrheim, his federation, the CGT and foreign organizers failed to significantly improve relations between French workers and foreign workers. The national animosities that plagued the Lorraine continued unabated right up to the eve of World War I.³⁶ This would have an important bearing upon the manner in which Merrheim perceived the revolutionary capacity of the French workers. Labor and socioprofessional conflicts among French and foreign workers have generally been overlooked in assessments of the French workers' resolve to fight with other workers against the liberal-capitalist state.³⁷ Yet the labor-nationality conflicts in the Lorraine greatly worried the leaders of the CGT as they tried to devise a strategy to solve these tensions among the workers.³⁸

Merrheim was deeply marked by his experiences in the Lorraine. On the strictly personal level, he had to go into hiding briefly because the mine owners had filed three lawsuits against him.³⁹ This was not the first nor would it be the last time the authorities would be trying to convict Merrheim; in this instance the lawsuits only had a nuisance value. More significantly, he became acutely aware how far French workers were from the internationalist sentiments expressed by labor leaders at national and international gatherings. The lesson of the nationality-labor conflicts in the Lorraine from 1905 to 1914 was instrumental in Merrheim's unconscious march toward reformism. So were the events of the Hennebont strike, which is the subject of Chapter 3.

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE EIGHT-HOUR WORKDAY. THE STRIKE OF HENNEBONT, 1906

Just one year after Merrheim's discovery of the Lorraine and its problems, he became involved in the CGT's largest single strike effort to date. On May 1, 1906, the CGT launched a national strike movement hoping to force the government to reduce the legal workday for all industrial workers to eight hours.¹ The difficulties Merrheim encountered in preparing for the May Day strikes and their dubious outcome set back his revolutionary resolve another decisive step.

The decision to begin a national campaign for an eight-hour workday was taken at the CGT's Congress of Bourges (September 1904). From the outset, however, there was some confusion and eventually compromise regarding what tactics to follow. A committee that had studied the issue of the reduced workday suggested two possible methods to begin the strike movement. First, the CGT could propose a law to public authorities while workers demonstrated their approval of the eight-hour workday. Or, second, the workers could exert all possible pressure by all the means at their disposal to win the reform while standing aloof from the public powers. The committee recommended the second alternative and also proposed that the workers begin their total mobilization for the eight-hour workday on May 1, 1906. To this suggestion, Emile Pouget added an amendment: he called upon workers to simply refuse to work more than eight hours after May 1, 1906. The congress adopted the committee's and Pouget's proposals.²

Following the congress the CGT's Confederal Committee, composed of the delegates of the confederation's Section of the Bourses du Travail and the Section of the Federations, undertook a vast propaganda effort to implement the decision and established the Commission des Huits Heures (Commission for the Eight-Hour Workday) chaired by Paul Delesalle. Pouget became its most active member. As for May 1, 1905, the CGT intended it to merely serve as a warm-up for the following year, which it did successfully. Union activists also began organizing and speaking throughout France, and by the end of 1905 union meetings had multiplied significantly. During December 1905, for instance, ten major syndicalists

including Merrheim held conferences in eighty cities. A police spy reported agitation in the provinces, and he also wrote that the CGT was sending posters to the principal industrial centers and to the Bourses du Travail to prepare for meetings.³

Merrheim welcomed the organizational drive and urged his rank-and-file to support it.⁴ He was especially active in local regions, trying to obtain support for the strike movement. Thus he campaigned in the Centre and also visited locales in the Nord, among them Cateau, Denain, Hautmont, Sous-le-Bois, Anzin, Raismes, Onnaing, Roubaix, and Tourcoing.⁵ He also arranged regional conferences for metalworkers.⁶

The results of Merrheim's efforts were mixed. A proclamation coming out of the Federation of Metalworkers' Executive Committee expressed a great deal of enthusiasm for the anticipated May Day strike movement.⁷ When the federation held its 1905 congress, however, it became apparent that not all local unions shared the optimism of the national leaders. The congress recognized that local unions had a certain degree of autonomy, and furthermore, that many may not have been prepared or inclined towards vigorous action on May 1. Consequently, the delegates to the 1905 meeting resolved that 'it belongs neither to the Congress, nor to the Executive Committee [of the Federation] to impose on the unions a specific mode of action. Each union must take inspiration from the resolutions of the Congress of Bourges'.⁸ This caveat was a portent of future difficulties.

In those days, also, Merrheim's travels and meetings proved too rigorous for him.⁹ A police spy, after reporting that the Federation of Metalworkers was in the forefront of the May Day campaign, wrote that 'I consider Merrheim the most serious of all [...]. He strikes me as a man of great sincerity'. He observed, however, that Merrheim suffered from neurasthenia and was 'grieved having too often seen his campaigns lead to nothing'.¹⁰ This was the first indication that Merrheim suffered from nervous exhaustion because of overwork or prolonged mental strain, a condition, unfortunately, that became worse.

Meanwhile, the national campaign reached its height in April to May 1906, against the background of a miners' strike in the Nord and the Pas-de-Calais. The CGT's Conference of the Federations met in April to conclude the confederation's preparations.¹¹ Delegates, however, disagreed over the strategy to follow and pointed out that trouble had developed in the plans for May Day. The Federation of Metalworkers was singled out. Jean Latapie, Merrheim's co-secretary, believed the campaign began well in the steel industry, but he was displeased with its subsequent progress.¹² Struck of the Federation of Machinists criticised the Federation of Metalworkers for lack of full support. Struck also preferred agitating for

a ten-hour workday. Many workers, he explained, worked eleven hours; for them an eight-hour workday would be an unreasonable expectation.¹³ Another sign of difficulty was that some syndicalists wanted a complete work-stoppage on May 1, while others wanted the strike postponed to May 2 if talks with employers on May 1 failed.¹⁴ Some syndicalists, on the other hand, wondered whether the campaign would ever get off the ground.¹⁵ Merrheim, too, expressed his reservations. First, he defended the full commitment of Latapie and the Federation of Metalworkers, even when they questioned which centers of the steel industry would agitate. Workers were not prophets, he said. He also reported that distrust existed in some locals and blamed this on the lack of efficient propaganda by the central organizations.¹⁶ Many workers, he concluded, had lost confidence in the campaign.¹⁷

The outcome of the Conference of Federations was equally negative, and its resolutions reflected the CGT's ambivalence and diminished enthusiasm.¹⁸ For example, the conference called for strong worker demonstrations but suggested two tactics for May Day: on May 1 workers could stop working after eight hours, or not work at all that day. The conference, in short, had abdicated its responsibility to lead decisively and left to the rank-and-file workers the decision of exactly what to do on May 1.

The divisions manifested at the Conference of Federations threatened to undercut Merrheim and the CGT. National syndicalist leaders had prepared a campaign for two years only to doubt its outcome. In such a context, the CGT's varied composition could hurt the organization. It contained reformers and revolutionaries. The former preferred to work through the existing political machinery, while the latter favored direct economic action. Both factions frequently suggested dissimilar measures for a similar problem. Even when they agreed, however, their efforts were frustrated. The diverse industrial conditions throughout France made centralized coordination of such demonstrations difficult.

The government, too, added to the CGT's problems. Georges Clemenceau, the minister of the interior from March 1906 to October 1906, began transforming Paris into an armed camp by bringing in approximately 60,000 soldiers. Clemenceau capitalized on the labor unrest which intensified as May 1 drew near. During March 1906 an accident in a mine in northern France killed a worker, and a violent strike resulted, which added to the growing unrest. The postmen struck in April, leading off other strikes and demonstrations in Paris. Enemies of the government, especially monarchists, exploited the situation. On April 24, Victor Griffuelhes, secretary-general of the CGT, Pouget and Merrheim obtained an audience with Clemenceau. They complained that they were constantly being follow-

ed by the police and wished to know if they would be arrested. Clemenceau answered that he knew nothing about any secret surveillance and that as far as arresting them was concerned, he had no plans to do so at the moment; he added that he could not speak for what he might do in the future. Then Clemenceau, in a famous discourse, made his position clear to the CGT leaders: 'You are behind a barricade and I am in front of it; your means of action is disorder; my duty is to keep order. My role, therefore, is contrary to your efforts'.¹⁹ Following this interview, Clemenceau tried to discredit the eight-hour workday movement by 'discovering' a plot by monarchists and the CGT against the Republic. The government searched the homes of leading monarchists, Bonapartists, and the revolutionary syndicalists, and on the eve of May 1, arrested for a few days monarchist and syndicalist leaders, including Pouget, Merrheim, Gaston Lévy, the CGT treasurer, and Victor Griffuelhes.

The Beginning of the Hennebont Strike

Nevertheless, in May, 1906, the CGT struck for the eight-hour workday. Some tactical divisions and the attempted government repression could not halt the undertaking. According to plan, each federation secretary was responsible for coordinating a strike in a particular section of France, and Merrheim led the metalworkers of Hennebont.²⁰

A canton of 8,074 people in 1906, Hennebont is in the department of Morbihan in the arrondissement of Lorient in southwest Brittany. The Compagnie Française des Cirages (French Wax Works Company), with headquarters in Paris, had established forges for making wax there and in the surrounding communes. It was Merrheim's opinion that the company, whose production had steadily increased between 1861 and 1905, had never adequately raised workers' wages to meet the rising cost of living.²¹ As a result, conflicts between labor and management were not unknown to Hennebont. During 1902 there was a strike in the area and Jean Latapie, Henri Galantus, and Albert Bouchet of the metal- and copperworkers' federations had already organized workers there.²² Bad conditions continued, however, making the area ripe for further revolutionary syndicalist propaganda. The Department of Morbihan also figured in the CGT's plans for the May Day agitation. In December, 1905, Merrheim, Georges Yvetot, and other CGT representatives campaigned in Hennebont, making workers in this canton more receptive to revolutionary action and causing them to heed CGT plans and orders for May 1.²³

In Morbihan the eight-hour workday strikes began before May 1. By

April 3, members of the Bourse du Travail of Lorient, preparing for May 1, had already demonstrated and called for assistance from the CGT.²⁴ A police spy observed that by April 10 there was considerable ferment there. He noted further that Merrheim was in the area and had held meetings to obtain support for the strike.²⁵ Hennebont workers, as they indicated to Jacques Giband, mayor of Hennebont, director of the French Wax Works, and president of the Chamber of Commerce of Lorient, wanted higher wages, suppression of piece work, and the eight-hour workday. Giband forwarded these demands to Paris, but he believed that the company would reject them and concluded that there would be 'an extremely serious conflict'.²⁶ In fact, Hennebont syndicalists, in close touch with other Morbihan workers, began to hold demonstrations.²⁷ On Saturday, April 14, the Hennebont union presented its demands directly to Giband.²⁸ These called for increased wages, a daily rest period, two work shifts, and the eight-hour workday. Giband doubted that the company would grant them but promised to present them personally to officials of the firm in Paris and return with an answer on April 23. The Hennebont commissioner of police was convinced that the workers would strike for their claims, and other reports corroborated his estimation.²⁹ The commissioner's prediction materialized on April 23. On April 19, Lorientian workers had called a general strike and hoped the Hennebont workers would follow.³⁰ The latter, meeting on April 22, decided to wait for Giband's reply.³¹ They received his negative response at their Monday, April 23, meeting,³² and by a vote of 630 for, 490 against, and 52 blank votes, they decided to strike.³³

The CGT's first delegate to Lorient and Hennebont (the strikers in these two cities cooperated), Claude Sélaquet, a metalworker and Bourse du Travail representative, arrived in Hennebont on April 27.³⁴ He insisted that the workers achieve the eight-hour workday with no decrease in wages.³⁵ On another occasion he warned the strikers to prepare 'for long days of suffering and resistance'. Blood might flow, he warned, but the leaders would back the strikers with their presence.³⁶ On May 3, Giband posted an open letter warning that the factory might close down and advising the workers to seek jobs elsewhere if they wished. This letter, which 'produced a very great impression', only made the strikers more aggressive and determined.³⁷ Sélaquet dismissed Giband's threat to shut down the factory, informed the strikers that the union would provide them with bread, and concluded that 'the strike is our legitimate force'. The company, on the other hand, blamed outsiders like Sélaquet for the troubles.³⁸ But when the appeal to provincial distaste for outsiders failed to deter the workers, Giband's police arrested Sélaquet. The strikers, now even more adamant, wired to Paris for another leader. Alphonse Merrheim was the person who responded to their appeal.³⁹

Merrheim's Problems. Company Tactics and the Syndicalist Variety

In Hennebont Merrheim faced a strong, unsympathetic company that had strong ties to public authorities and force. Giband combined his powers as mayor of Hennebont and director of the French Wax Works to fight the strikers. For example, Merrheim suspected that one of Giband's aims was to destroy the 'red union' and that he had ordered the arrest of Sélaquet. Moreover, Merrheim charged Giband with asking store owners in Hennebont to refuse credit to the strikers and noted that Giband was trying to block the union's attempt to distribute food to hungry workers.⁴⁰ The company also employed strike breakers. From the very beginning a group of workers was hostile to the strike. One police report stated, 'The struggle continues to be lively at Hennebont between the partisans of the strike and the numerous workers who are hostile to it. The idea of a referendum remains ever present. For their part the delegates are doing all they can to bring the workers to strike'.⁴¹ Predictably, the company used this split to break the strike. In one instance, it secured the services as company foreman of Kerbastard, the very secretary of the Hennebont union. The latter returned to work with twenty-eight other strikers, and Merrheim admitted that Kerbastard's betrayal convinced employers that the strike could not last.⁴² The company also wore down workers by rejecting their claims while simultaneously opening the factory to those who wished to return. Furthermore, in mid-June, Giband wrote to each worker, implying that he should return by July 15, the day on which Giband would open a register for the resumption of work.⁴³ Merrheim countered by saying that Giband was begging the workers to resume work.⁴⁴ Giband won, however. Many who had not worked for three months gave up, and the prefect's daily reports to Paris from mid-July on are often only a steadily increasing count of strikers resuming work.⁴⁵ This development demoralized many, and violent clashes between strikers and strike breakers and their families broke out.⁴⁶

In one instance Giband's action against the workers so threatened the peace that even the prefect of Morbihan objected. At the end of June, Giband had begun loading a barge with iron as if there were no strike. Workers took this as a defiant and insensitive gesture, for at issue was whether Giband would move the barge. Workers, police, and troops anxiously milled about the boat. The prefect warned Giband that moving the barge would mean trouble; he then wired to Paris that Giband was purposely forcing an incident. Finally, on July 10, the prefect of Morbihan suspended Giband from his post as mayor, charging that he abused public office for company business.⁴⁷ The barge remained in port and the prefect had averted trouble.

While directing the strike Merrheim also had to contend with federation business in Paris, opposition from non-union workers, and the hostility some strikers felt toward him as an 'outsider'. Merrheim was forced to explain how he led the strike and his federation in response to accusations that he travelled second rather than third class on train trips from Paris to Hennebont.⁴⁸ On Thursdays, he left Hennebont at 9 p.m., arriving in Paris at 11 a.m. the following day; Friday morning he answered federation correspondence; Friday evening he attended a meeting of the federation's executive committee till midnight. On Saturday, he handled more federation business until 9 p.m., then left Paris for Hennebont. This pace, he asserted, deserved riding in comfort. On the other hand, a nonunion worker expressed the hostility some provincials felt towards syndicalist leaders from Paris. On June 5, 1906, a nonunion truck driver, addressing a meeting in the town of Garode, stated that he had left the union when he saw his dues 'fatten the good-for-nothings of the confederation'. He also attacked the strike committee for continuing a seemingly futile strike and complained that Hennebont workers did not need the services of strangers for talks with the employers'.⁴⁹

Merrheim and the Conduct of the Strike

Merrheim remained firm before such obstacles. He was never a more tenacious labor leader than at Hennebont. He insisted that workers, if they could not obtain the eight-hour workday, at least gain a modicum of reform. But the French Wax Works held firm and gave nothing. At one point Merrheim, frustrated, suggested that workers might even use violence.⁵⁰ Some threats were oratorical flourishes, to be sure, but he had some good reasons for urging the strikers to continue their resistance. Should they return without any gains, their position would be worse than before the strike. Their union, he believed, would be morally and financially bankrupt. Consequently, from the moment he arrived in Hennebont, Merrheim constantly exhorted strikers to obtain something for their many sacrifices. A police spy reported that Merrheim had proclaimed that the strike should continue until workers 'have obtained all or part of their claims'.⁵¹ Workers must 'not return to work with lowered heads', he said on another occasion.⁵² Part of Merrheim's toughness was also based upon his conviction that the strike would be over in two weeks.⁵³ This, however, was a miscalculation, as we shall see below.

Police observers noted Merrheim's determination to settle the strike fairly, but their reports also recorded the many pressures that frequently upset

him. One document stated that he and Latapie worked endlessly for the strikers, 'facilitating [...] the solution of numerous conflicts between the employers and the proletariat'.⁵⁴ When Merrheim had obtained nothing by mid-June, however, he became 'more violent than usual against the capitalist system and the employer class, and incidentally engaged in an antimilitarist tirade'.⁵⁵ In another instance, he insisted that workers remain steadfast and angrily discounted rumors that the strike committee's finances were giving out or that it would soon cease its distribution of bread.⁵⁶ His speech heartened the weary workers who then voted to continue the strike.⁵⁷ Giband's desire to destroy the union made Merrheim's speeches unusually forceful.

Such campaigns harried Merrheim, and pressure from the government added to his difficulties. In Paris, Clemenceau had him and other syndicalist leaders arrested shortly before May 1 in an attempt to break the May Day movement.⁵⁸ In Hennebont, local officials began a legal indictment against Merrheim for 'provocations against the military'.⁵⁹ Clemenceau also had an agent spy on him. The dossier the spy sent to Paris is informative, for it confirmed that the prosecutor of Lorient had indicted Merrheim 'for having made several revolutionary speeches'. In addition, it stated that before the Hennebont strike, he was known 'as a prudent man, incapable of being carried along to commit a misdemeanor', and that he worried about the charges against him. Merrheim even talked to Clemenceau about the possible arrest, telling the minister that the police were hounding him out of revenge and that the union's struggle against oppression was not a misdemeanor. The report concluded that another federation official had to temporarily replace Merrheim, who was too harassed to continue without a rest.⁶⁰ No wonder another police agent wrote that Merrheim 'was very worried at not clearly being able to see a solution' and warned that the strike might end in violence.⁶¹

The meeting with Clemenceau is interesting because it illustrates – no matter what the police agent wrote about violence – Merrheim's concern for his personal safety and his fear of governmental power. Moreover, it demonstrated his willingness to negotiate with the 'enemy class'.⁶² As for Clemenceau, the Hennebont strike concerned him because, like others of its duration, it was potentially very dangerous. Thus, on June 7, the minister sent an aide to Hennebont for information.⁶³ On July 3, he and the prefect of Morbihan arranged a meeting among four union representatives, Giband, and company officials.⁶⁴ Although the meeting was inconclusive and Giband refused to yield, *L'Humanité*, the official journal of the Socialist Party, praised Clemenceau's mediation efforts.⁶⁵ Merrheim also met with Clemenceau on behalf of the strikers. On July 25 and 26, for

instance, he tried to have the minister prevent 'police brutalities' in Hennebont.⁶⁶

The End of the Strike

Despite the strike, Clemenceau's intervention, and Merrheim's willingness to compromise, the company refused to make any concessions. Giband wanted to break the strike and destroy the revolutionary syndicalist union. For his part, Merrheim realized that the strike could not continue much longer, since strikers were beginning to return to work. He insisted that the strikers remain firm, however, so that workers might gain some reform and keep their union intact. During the last two weeks of the strike, therefore, he alternated negotiations with threats of force.⁶⁷

When Giband's wish that full work resume on August 1 did not materialize, he ordered the strikers to vacate their company-owned homes within a week.⁶⁸ On August 1, however, Merrheim ordered workers to continue striking, and he reasserted this order at union meetings on August 2, 3, and 4. On August 5, desperate and tense, Merrheim was 'especially violent in order to spur the workers to continue the strike and to oppose, with violence if necessary, the resumption of work'.⁶⁹ On another occasion he told workers to block the factory's entrance, even if blood had to flow. The strikers obeyed, but the police dispersed them.⁷⁰ In 'the name of humanity' Merrheim implored the strikers not to return with a 'lowered head'.⁷¹ For their part, those strikers who held out attacked the homes of strike breakers, and on the night of August 6, several fires broke out in Hennebont. The prefect summoned Merrheim to the city hall, blamed him for the fires, and threatened his arrest.⁷² Merrheim suggested that a workers' delegation talk to the prefect about strike matters, and finally, on August 8, talks resumed between union and company officials. Now Giband promised to raise wages, to try the eight-hour workday, and to recognize the revolutionary syndicalist union.⁷³ He refused to write this out, however, insisting that the strike committee trust him. The committee, in a weak position, accepted Giband's condition. Then the latter posted a notice stating that he had promised to 'alleviate' not 'augment' wages, that any changes must not reduce company profits, and that his terms were un-negotiable.⁷⁴ In short, Giband would not raise wages or reduce the workday if this cut into the company's earnings. Furthermore, the company announced it would not rehire all strikers. The best Merrheim and union leaders could do on this point was to convince the company to reduce the list of strikers not being rehired from 150 to 10; and the latter found jobs elsewhere.⁷⁵

Since the company would go no further and additional union resistance was useless, Merrheim admitted defeat and ended the strike, even though many workers wanted to hold out for more. On the morning of August 12, the union held a vote. Of 1,600 union members, only 750 voted, with 605 for and 145 against continuing the strike. During an afternoon meeting, Merrheim and the strike committee announced the results and their own decision to end the conflict, which could not continue with only a minority of the company's workers, they said.⁷⁶ The strike was over, 'Long live the Strike', someone yelled,⁷⁷ a 'declaration [that] was greeted by grumbling by the men and violent protests by the women', Merrheim wrote later. He noted, however, that prolonging the strike was impossible and would have completely destroyed the union. On the evening of August 12, therefore, he delivered the strike committee's decision to end the walk-out.⁷⁸

The workers had not obtained what they had wanted, but Merrheim remained confident. Along with other revolutionary syndicalists, he believed that one day a workers' revolutionary general strike would overthrow capitalism. Workers, however, would have to prepare themselves for that eventuality and a strike such as the one at Hennebont was an important step in the development of a revolutionary consciousness among its participants. Since Merrheim's revolutionary goal was far off, he regarded all gains as important and setbacks as temporary. The tasks that remained were all important, and his farewell to the strikers was both realistic and inspirational. 'In spite of your 111-day struggle, your sufferings and privations, the fight is not over. Everything must begin anew tomorrow morning'. Strikers should remain united, because 'you are the avant-garde of the proletariat'. He urged the workers to maintain their revolutionary consciousness and to 'raise your children with revolutionary ideas so that they may be free men while waiting for the transformation of society [...]'.⁷⁹

On the surface Merrheim was relatively satisfied with the outcome of the strike. He hoped it had radicalized its participants, an important function of the strike, since radicalization would contribute to the ultimate syndicalist victory.⁸⁰ The introduction of revolutionary consciousness into the Hennebont area far outweighed the failure to obtain significant reforms. The Hennebont strikers, Merrheim wrote, would not forget '*that the Republic is no better than any other social regime*'. It grants the worker some education but establishes 'economic repression'.⁸¹ That workers had absorbed this lesson pleased Merrheim. The CGT was also confident and impressed with the large turnout on May 1, for it, too, believed that revolutionary ideas had spread, since a large number of workers had recently joined the confederation.⁸²

Merrheim, too, learned from this strike. His revolutionary syndicalist at-

titude was determined largely by his participation in trade union activities, especially strikes. At Hennebont he began to learn that syndicalists faced a powerful employer class and government. It remained for him to investigate exactly how powerful and to determine which course revolutionary syndicalists should take. This simply meant that, in the first instance, Merrheim had to master technical details concerning the power and organization of the steel magnates, a process of self-education he began most intensively in these years. He did so in part because when he had arrived at Hennebont he realized how deficient he was in understanding the steel industry's technical reports. Even as late as 1907, he stated that when steel barons from Germany, Great Britain, and Italy, all members of an international cartel, had met in Paris, 'We [the syndicalists] had to follow their discussion and to examine their reports. I actually had to go to a mining engineer to learn how to read financial reports'.⁸³ At Hennebont, Merrheim had talked with a company engineer, whose financial reports completely baffled him. Remembering François Delaisi's study on Longwy, Merrheim looked him up personally for information and assistance.⁸⁴ A long collaboration between them began, which lasted until 1913 and reached its zenith in the period after 1908 in Merrheim's published studies on the French steel industry. These studies, which are discussed in Chapter 6, attest to Merrheim's complete mastery of the technical and financial operations of this industry.

Yet there was a negative aspect to the May Day strikes. The government successfully resisted the strikers' primary demand for an eight-hour workday, and only 10,177 workers of 202,507 strikers obtained any reduction of their working hours.⁸⁵ The only reform the government did grant the strikers was a mandatory daily rest period (July 13, 1906).

Merrheim was aware of the magnitude of the national strike movement, his own arduous efforts in Hennebont, and the meager results. The studies he undertook of the steel industry, moreover, documented the power of capitalism and the relative weakness of the workers' movement. For a few months after the May Day strikes, he and the CGT still had a sense of euphoria born of the very extent of the strikes. It was not long, however, before this mood gave way to a major crisis of confidence in the CGT. Merrheim reflected this crisis and, by his unique interpretation of revolutionary syndicalism, contributed to it significantly.

PART II
THE CRISIS OF REVOLUTIONARY SYNDICALISM, 1906-1914

CHAPTER 4

THE CRISIS IN THE CGT

Immediately following the 1906 May Day strikes, the leaders of the CGT gave the impression that they had won a great moral victory. The confident resolutions passed at their ninth annual congress, which met in October 1906 in Amiens, serve as an excellent barometer of the syndicalist temper. For instance, this congress established a 'propaganda commission for the eight-hour day and the general strike' which, in turn, announced that it would continue the May Day strike tradition each year. More important, it passed the definitive statement of the revolutionary syndicalists' immediate objectives and eventual goal. It came up in the context of a debate begun by Victor Renard of the Federation of Textile Workers, when he suggested that formal ties should exist between the CGT and the Socialist Party. Merrheim concluded a blistering attack on Renard's position, which he considered reformist, by advising that syndicalists should 'leave to the union its proper role of real class struggle; its job should be to conduct an incessant struggle against all legalisms, all public powers, all oppressive forces [...]'.¹ This statement best represented the feelings of the majority of delegates, who proceeded to reject Renard's motion as well as one by Auguste Keufer, secretary of the *Fédération du Livre* (Federation of Printers), which had proposed that the CGT would not undertake 'anarchist' or 'antiparliamentary' agitation. Rather, the congress passed Victor Griffuelhes's proposal – it became known as the Charter of Amiens – which established that the CGT was grouped outside of all formal political parties and would operate through direct economic action to destroy capitalism. Revolutionary syndicalism, it said, aims for 'total emancipation, which can be realized only by the expropriation of capitalism. Syndicalism advocates the general strike as the method to accomplish its goal'.²

Gradually, however, the mood of optimism gave way to a profound pessimism, a sentiment that corresponded to a deep crisis among workers. The strength of the government and the employers was largely responsible. In October 1906 Georges Clemenceau, minister of the interior since March, became the Prime Minister until 1909. He was determined to block the syndicalists.³ During his ministry, therefore, he increased the harassment of

syndicalists and granted more power to the police which became increasingly arbitrary toward the CGT and stepped up its spying program within the confederation.⁴ Clemenceau also used troops forcefully to break CGT strikes, most notably in June 1907 among wine producers in southern France and in June to August 1908 among building trades workers in Draveil. In both instances the CGT gave in to the government. Following the 1907 strike, Griffuelhes commented that a 'momentary fatigue' gripped the CGT.⁵ In 1909, Griffuelhes himself became implicated in financial irregularities related to his administration. The ensuing scandal forced him to resign the secretary-generalship of the confederation in February 1909. As a result, reformist and revolutionary factions within the confederation attacked each other openly and Merrheim recognized in print that revolutionary syndicalism was undergoing a major crisis characterized by a shift of the CGT toward too much theorizing and not enough action as well as by insufficient leadership.⁶

Because Merrheim was an active participant and often a key figure in all these events, the CGT's difficulties were additional factors in dampening his confidence in the power of the working class. From 1906 he increasingly doubted that revolutionary syndicalists, the advanced sector of the working class, could successfully challenge the state or the capitalists in a revolution.

The Strike of Draveil-Villeneuve-Saint-Georges

Draveil and Villeneuve-Saint-Georges are neighboring cities not too far southwest of Paris. In July 1908 these two cities became linked by a strike that broke out there among building trades workers. The various building trades unions had united into one federation in 1907, the *Fédération du Bâtiment* (Federation of Building Trades Workers), and emerged with a strong activist spirit. During the first months of 1908 the Parisian sections of the Federation of Building Trades Workers had stirred up a considerable amount of labor agitation. By the end of May of that year, strikes – mostly for the eight-hour workday – had broken out in the towns of Draveil, Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, Villeneuve-le-Roi, and in the Seine region. As a consequence, employers from twenty-six firms affected by the walkouts formed their own union to resist the workers' demands. In response, the Parisian leaders of the federation only increased their campaign in various local districts. For example, in Vigneau, near Draveil, strike soup kitchens were already operating. Given these preparations, the atmosphere became tense and a spark led to an explosion. On June 2, a small delegation of workers was sitting in an outdoor café when gendarmes arrived; shooting

broke out and when it ceased two workers lay dead and ten wounded.

As a result of this incident, a large group of building trades workers demonstrated on June 7 in the cemetery of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. Moreover, plans were soon formulated to launch a total strike in the building trades industry and a general strike by the CGT. Indeed, on July 28, the Federation of Building Trades Workers did announce an industrywide strike. Thousands of its members responded by marching to Draveil. The CGT, however, was caught unprepared; it had opposed such strong action in principle but now reluctantly supported the strikers. July 30 was decisive for on that day severe street fighting broke out between workers and the police. Clemenceau acted quickly: on August 1 he arrested the important leaders of the CGT. In addition, the general strike call was not successful and the movement ended in total failure.

When the strike of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges had begun, the CGT picked Merrheim to report on its progress; most of the dispatches in the CGT's journal, *La Voix du Peuple*, on the strike were written by him. He was also on the CGT's list of 'energetic men' who were slated to take charge in Draveil. Throughout this episode, however, he betrayed a considerable amount of caution mixed with fear. Although he fulfilled his leadership functions with vigor, he also betrayed a great deal of inner tension and conflict, traits that were obvious to others. For instance, a police agent reported that at the last moment a few labor leaders, including Merrheim, 'fearing their responsibilities, have wavered [...]'.⁷ This same reporter singled out Merrheim as the one significant Paris labor leader who 'has avoided going to Draveil'.⁸ Edouard Ricordeau, one of the strike leaders, also accused Merrheim in 1911 of not being in Draveil during the conflict. Ricordeau, however, was himself suspected by the syndicalists of being a police agent, although this was never proved.⁹ Ricordeau's charge, whatever else its merits, points up the sorry state of the CGT at that time. As for Merrheim, the police agent indicated in another report that several confederation chiefs – he mentioned Alphonse Merrheim, Georges Yvetot, Pierre Monatte, and Paul Delesalle – had travelled to Draveil on one occasion with guns.¹⁰ The truth is that Merrheim certainly was in Draveil although perhaps not as often as other strike leaders. Furthermore, it was quite out of his character to have armed himself. The spy was merely lumping Merrheim's names with the others, but was quite correct, however, about his fearfulness.

Behind the scenes Merrheim did attempt to restrain the CGT. When the general strike proposal emerged, he doubted it would succeed; he preferred a more limited antigovernment measure. Emile Pouget and Victor Grifuelhes shared this sentiment. Georges Yvetot and Gaston Lévy, on the

other hand, favored spirited and even violent action. In short, a serious split existed in the CGT.¹¹ When the Federation of Building Trades Workers decided on July 28 to strike, Merrheim and others at CGT headquarters were 'surprised' and stated privately 'that it was a bad tactic to act now'. The Lévy faction challenged that assessment.¹² Despite its divisions and hesitations, the CGT could simply not abandon the building trades workers. On July 31, its directors met at confederation headquarters to decide on an action. At a private meeting before this public one, Merrheim's federation at first supported him and rejected the general strike. However, at about 10 p.m. the electricians section of the Federation of Metalworkers joined the discussions. This group was a partisan of a general strike and its presence tipped the balance for this tactic.¹³ Very late in the evening, the CGT's Confederal Committee, by a small majority, voted for a general strike of forty eight hours. Fearing that the police would arrest him, Griffuelhes slept at the confederation's headquarters that night and a spy reported that in all probability Merrheim and Pouget slept in their respective offices as well. The police, however, were waiting outside several union headquarters and on the following day, led by the prefect of police of Paris, Louis Lépine, they arrested the key members of the CGT's Confederal Committee, including Griffuelhes, Yvetot, and Pouget. Only three important leaders were not sought – Jean Latapie, Gaston Lévy, and Alphonse Merrheim.¹⁴ Undoubtedly the police did not consider these last men that dangerous. They were correct as far as Merrheim was concerned.

Previous arrests by Clemenceau had already provoked considerable hesitancy and division in the CGT. These new arrests only made matters worse for the revolutionary syndicalists.

As for Merrheim, one very complete report on him in the police archives accounts for some of his caution and also explains why police left him alone. It records that in July Merrheim had gone on a mission to the southwest of France to enlist syndicalist support for the building trades workers in the event of a general strike. He completely failed in this task, however. Not even the workers of Cluses, whom he had led in 1904, and who were then (July 18) holding an anniversary demonstration for their 1904 strike, would commit themselves. No wonder Merrheim had doubts about a general strike. But the spy saw another reason for Merrheim's wavering and went to the heart of the matter when he wrote that 'He [Merrheim] went to Draveil yesterday. But despite his energetic allure, Merrheim is a timid person and he fears nothing more than going to prison. That is why, when he saw the turn of events, he was so eager to release the men whom he has led from Paris to Draveil'.¹⁵

The failure of the general strike adversely affected the morale of the CGT. Many suspected that Clemenceau's police agents had provoked these events, and accusations and suspicions were widespread. At 'CGT [headquarters] people are certain that the riot was intended [by the police] and that numerous acts have been the work of *agents provocateurs*. Merrheim has even announced recently at the confederal committee of the confederation that an important person, who for the moment wishes to remain in the shadows, would furnish proof of these facts at the appropriate time'.¹⁶ Around the halls of headquarters 'people are asking themselves whether those who have forced them to act and ordered a general strike were not knowingly or unknowingly under the influence of instigators'.¹⁷ One revolutionary syndicalist, Gustave Hervé, charged that there was a connection between Lucien Métivier, a labor agitator at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, and Clemenceau. Whatever the precise relationship between these two men, Clemenceau certainly took advantage of the violence at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges to establish a harsh policy towards the CGT.¹⁸ Indeed, the CGT did discover in 1911 that Métivier was a police agent. That revelation did not change much, however, because even immediately after the strike the CGT was in disarray. A police reporter summed up the situation best: 'Since the check of the general strike following the bloody events of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, and since the arrest of its principal leaders, the General Confederation of Labor has entered a period of lull [...]'.¹⁹

Merrheim and the New Bureau

Contributing to the confusion and bitterness at CGT headquarters was a conflict over control of the confederation, another consequence of Clemenceau's arrests. Considering that most of the important CGT leaders were in jail, Merrheim was the most logical temporary successor to Grif-fuelhes. Yet Merrheim's colleagues passed him over and elected instead a relative unknown, Alexandre Luquet of the Federation of Barbers; Merrheim was not even included among the new Executive Bureau of the CGT. The bureau consisted of thirteen members who summoned and carried out the decisions of the Confederal Committee. One explanation was the possibility of Merrheim's own imminent arrest;²⁰ uninterrupted leadership of the CGT, the argument went, was at least assured by having a relatively lackluster and unknown Executive Bureau. In fact, Merrheim feared he might be arrested – a concern that plagued him throughout his life – and

he took precautions to conceal his whereabouts. He worried, too, that the police might dissolve the CGT. And he was convinced that the police had a well-paid spy in the confederation.²¹

Despite Merrheim's official absence from the new Executive Bureau the police were convinced that he was its real, albeit unofficial leader. 'Merrheim is the soul' of the Executive Bureau, a spy wrote to his superior. In another communiqué this same man reported that 'Luquet – who has replaced Griffuelhes – is not the real secretary-general of the General Confederation of Labor. That person is Merrheim [...]'.²² This was probably true in the early days of the new bureau's existence since it was inexperienced and Merrheim could provide it with guidance.

Tension, however, soon developed between Merrheim and the new Executive Bureau. By late August the spy who believed that Merrheim was the center of the new leadership reported that he was miffed at having been passed over as the temporary secretary-general. The reporter also indicated that if the government prolonged the arrests Merrheim would purposely exploit to his advantage the mistakes of the inexperienced Executive Bureau.²³ 'Merrheim does not have the ascendancy over Luquet [...] as he did with Griffuelhes and Pouget', wrote a perceptive police agent.²⁴ Meanwhile 'Luquet is beginning to seem impatient with Merrheim's intrusion into all the business of the Executive Bureau'.²⁵ By January 1909 another police report stated more bluntly: 'He [Luquet] is irritated by the comings and goings of Merrheim [...]'.²⁶

One specific fight between Merrheim and Luquet's administration concerned a proposal by an anarchist, Fortuné Henry, to begin a new daily, *La Mère Peinard*, which the latter wanted to sell to the CGT. Merrheim was furious because his own attempts to start a new paper, *Le Cri du Peuple*, were going badly and the subscription rates for another paper he supported, *L'Action Directe*, were declining. Aside from the fact that Merrheim did not trust Henry, the issue became a power play between Merrheim and Luquet's bureau. Merrheim came out second best since Henry did get *La Mère Peinard* published.²⁷ The real source of the conflict, however, was Merrheim's desire to be the new secretary-general of the CGT, a fact that soon became evident to the police. 'Merrheim, who burns with envy for this post, announces modestly, even before Luquet has officially spoken of resignation, that he would not be a candidate', a police observer wrote.²⁸ Luquet, on the other hand, liked his new job and intended to keep it as long as Griffuelhes remained in jail.²⁹

Such infighting greatly disrupted the CGT. Even Merrheim once remarked: 'Whatever one says, whatever one does, it's essential that Griffuelhes returns'.³⁰ The government, however, continued to detain Griffuelhes,

releasing him only after the next general congress of the CGT at Marseille in October 1908, and the CGT's difficulties spilled over to this meeting.

The Congress of Marseille

Now that the confederation's leaders were in jail, political reformers within the CGT – those who favored an alliance with the Socialist party and agitation through parliamentary means rather than exclusively by direct economic action – prepared an offensive against the old guard of the revolutionary syndicalist movement. They did so partly behind-the-scenes, in debates over whether to admit the the *Fédération des Mineurs* (Miners), a reformist union, into the CGT, and over several items on the agenda of the Congress of Marseille.

The Federation of Miners, hitherto unaffiliated, decided after Clemenceau had arrested the CGT's directors to join the confederation; fearing the power of the state, it sought safety in numbers. Its decision, however, caused unrest in some quarters because this federation was dominated by socialists and reformers. Their admission could strengthen the hand of the non-revolutionaries in the CGT and the issue certainly became mixed up with the conflict already under way in the confederation. The police reported that 'opposition to especially Griffuelhes, Pouget, Monatte, Merrheim and others' was taking shape in anticipation of the congress. Opponents began accusing the permanent leadership of inactivity; the confederation leaders, they charged, directed an occasional strike but mostly remained at their headquarters where many simply wrote articles 'in the 'bourgeois' press'. An informer noted that the 'united socialists' wanted to control the CGT and *La Voix du Peuple* and that the police should watch this interesting development.³¹

As for the old guard, it feared that reformers would join with the miners at the congress and pass a system of proportional representation. According to the statutes of the CGT adopted by the Congress of Montpellier in 1902, every organization in the confederation, regardless of its size, was entitled to one vote in the Confederal Committee. Voting by proportional representation would enhance the power of such unions as the Federation of Textile Workers, a reformist and numerically large union, against groups such as the Federation of Metalworkers, traditionally revolutionary but small in membership.³²

This issue was out in the open at confederation headquarters, so that on the night of June 15, 1908, for example, a meeting of the CGT's Confederal Committee had discussed the miners.³³ There Pouget and Grif-

fuelhes had stood as intransigent opponents to the entrance of the miners, whereas Albert Bourderon of the Federation of Barrel Makers, Claude Liochon of the Federation of Printers, and L. Malarde of the Federation of Tobacco Workers felt that the miners could be admitted but only if they agreed to an apolitical stance and direct action. Merrheim was not at this meeting because his own federation contained several miners' unions and he did not want to offend them since he favored direct action.

The police not only analyzed the dilemma of the revolutionaries; they summed up the mood pervading the CGT. The immediate problem concerned numbers. The moderates could count on 321 votes at the congress and the revolutionaries on 409; 388 organizations were doubtful.³⁴ At the general congress each union had one vote. At Marseille, the miners' unions could tip the balance toward one group or the other. Just before the congress, therefore, the revolutionaries and reformers began to line up their votes and prepare for a showdown. To an outsider it seemed that the CGT was 'starting to resemble an anarchistic and disorganized group'.³⁵

Meanwhile the government continued to keep Griffuelhes, Pouget, and Yvetot in jail without a trial, thereby permitting the reformers to take advantage of the absence of the three leaders from the Marseille congress.³⁶

Merrheim, too, feared the miners, but he could live with them in the CGT as long as his faction could prevent them from passing proportional representation. Before and during the congress, therefore, he was busy gathering votes for the revolutionary position. He sought, too, the advice of the prisoners on a tactic to follow when he visited them in jail; their conversation was not recorded. The police believed that in this situation Merrheim could be a pivotal figure, since he was one of the few, then free, with recognized stature and authority.³⁷

Before the congress met, however, the Confederal Committee had already admitted the miners into the CGT. The confederation had felt Clemenceau's attacks acutely and it needed its ranks strengthened. For its part, the Federation of Miners had met all the formal requirements of membership, and opposition to it had to remain private. The key question now was whether this federation would have a fundamental impact on the CGT's policy. This would be settled at the congress, where the syndicalists tested their strength over several issues: the Confederal Committee's defense of its actions at Draveil, proportional representation for the Confederal Committee, and antimilitarism.

In the debates on these topics Merrheim vigorously defended the revolutionary stance. 'Concerning the strike of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, the Executive Committee has simply accomplished its duty [...]', Merrheim stated.³⁸ Later, he justified his positive vote to admit the miners. The job

of the Confederal Committee, he said, was only to pass judgment on formal requirements. 'We are simply people who comply with, who adopt ourselves to, circumstances; but we shall never draw back in the face of our responsibilities, and we have treated the Federation of Miners as any other group'.³⁹ Although he did not take part in the debate on proportional representation, his federation proposed the successful resolution against it. Moreover, it was Merrheim's resolution on antimilitarism that carried the day. That resolution declared that any outbreak of war would be met by a workers' general strike.⁴⁰ In short, when the congress was over, the revolutionaries had emerged victorious. They had won over the uncommitted unions and the Federation of Miners did not make that much difference.

Merrheim was content. 'I am satisfied with the Congress [...]. People said that the CGT would have a new orientation because of the affiliation of the miners and the inroads of the reformist unions; that was not the case and the Congress proved it'.⁴¹ On the surface it seemed that Clemenceau's offensive against the CGT had failed.⁴² In reality, however, such battles drained a considerable amount of energy from the confederation and its members. Moreover, moderate federations like the Federation of Miners would have a subtle impact on the CGT eventually. Finally, in this era the confederation had no respite from difficulties, no time to consolidate its position. Shortly after the Congress, the affair of the *Maison des Fédérations* broke out.

The Affair of the Maisons des Fédérations

During this period, Gaston Lévy, treasurer of the CGT, had been arrested once by the police. During Lévy's incarceration, Griffuelhes replaced him with an anarchist, Alexandre Tennevin. However, neither the latter nor the secretary-general paid close attention to the treasury. This led inevitably to errors in the accounts. Lévy discovered the mistakes when he resumed his duties upon release from prison. He also unearthed some fiscal irregularities over the manner in which Griffuelhes had purchased a building in 1905 to serve as confederation headquarters. The latter had bought the building with union funds but through a company he owned. Since Lévy belonged to an 'ultrarevolutionary' faction, one that resented Griffuelhes's tight control over the confederation, he revealed the whole affair while the secretary-general was in prison.

Following the disclosure, the reformers and the ultras in the CGT joined ranks and publically attacked Griffuelhes. The CGT split into rival groups.

People such as Merrheim, Luquet, Auguste Garney, and Jules Bled supported Griffuelhes, while the reformers like Renard and Latapie and ultras like Lévy and Marius Blanchard attacked the secretary-general.⁴³ Single federations, too, were divided over this issue. Latapie and Merrheim were co-secretaries of the Federation of Metalworkers and yet on opposing sides in this fight.⁴⁴

As for Griffuelhes, he had done nothing immoral but his financial methods were unorthodox. A highly principled person, he was offended by the charges against him and he refused to run again for secretary-general of the CGT. Consequently, on February 24, 1909, ultras and reformers were able to elect a reformer, Louis Niel of the Federation of Printers, to Griffuelhes's post. Control of the CGT had now passed out of the hands of the classic revolutionary syndicalists.⁴⁵ Niel, however, proved so incompetent, especially in his handling of a postal strike, that he had to resign within three months of his ascendancy. Thus Niel presided over a special conference held especially to discuss the affair of the *Maison des Fédérations*, but only as a provisional leader.⁴⁶ The attacks against Griffuelhes continued at this conference (June 1 to 3, 1909), and the delegates voted to conduct a formal investigation of the CGT's account books. Not until July 12 did the majority of revolutionary syndicalists regroup their forces and elect one of their own, Léon Jouhaux, to replace Niel.⁴⁷ The CGT's national Congress of Toulouse, which met in October 1910, approved of this election and also exonerated Griffuelhes. The exoneration was anticlimactic, however, because the fighting between the two factions had been so bitter and the effects deep and lasting.⁴⁸ Ironically, too, ultimately Jouhaux could operate effectively only by being relatively moderate in the confederation.

Throughout the affair of the *Maison des Fédérations* Merrheim was Griffuelhes's most staunch defender. He attacked Niel's candidacy, writing that 'the unity which Niel advertises and symbolizes has as its goal to impart to working class action the most moderate, the most narrow, the most tame point of view'.⁴⁹ After Niel's election Merrheim wrote 'that the choice of Niel was [...] a sign of retreat'.⁵⁰ When coming out of the election meeting, Merrheim was heard to say that 'Viviani could be satisfied'. René Viviani was a socialist minister whom the syndicalists disliked. Niel resented the remark and promised that Merrheim would pay for it later.⁵¹ It was Merrheim, also, who delivered the longest defense of Griffuelhes at the special CGT conference and who co-sponsored the resolution of confidence for the former secretary-general of the Congress of Toulouse.⁵²

In the middle of all this furor, the police estimated that Merrheim had a good chance to succeed Niel but that he was not a candidate for the

post.⁵³ Merrheim was tired from all these disputes as well he might have been since he too suffered many personal attacks at this time. One police report indicated that his power in the CGT was declining and that he could not effectively help Griffuelhes and the others in jail. The same document recorded a charge that emerged frequently, namely the belief held by many syndicalists that Merrheim did not write his own articles but wrote them in collaboration with several middle class intellectuals. Francis Delaisi's name figured prominently among the latter. Worse still was the probability that Latapie, Merrheim's close colleague, was spreading this rumor, due no doubt to their differing political tendencies.⁵⁴ Another frequently heard criticism of Merrheim within union ranks was that he was afraid to return to the Nord and especially to Roubaix. An unsubstantiated speculation was that in his early career he was the foreman of a firm and had sided with the employer in labor disputes.⁵⁵ The rumor mill was confusing Merrheim with his father, who had been in fact a foreman. Closer to the truth is that Merrheim preferred not to visit the Nord 'because of the hate that he [Merrheim] inspires among the guesdists [...]'.⁵⁶ Criticism also emerged over Merrheim's cautious nature. A police agent reported that once, when talking about the strike of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, Merrheim supposedly said 'that a strike is not a revolution and that it is important, in a struggle, to conciliate public opinion'.⁵⁷ The implication of this report was that Merrheim was a moderate hiding behind a revolutionary facade. There were even charges that he had some very influential official protection at the time of the Villeneuve-Saint-Georges strike.⁵⁸ Such accusations followed him throughout his career, partly because he was indeed moderate, somewhat timid, and did have close relations with some middle-class intellectuals.

Such charges caused Merrheim considerable emotional discomfort and inner turmoil. Once he even had to suffer physical abuse because of his positions. For instance, there was one particular stormy scene at a special meeting of the CGT Control Commission, that was investigating the Maison des Fédérations affair. This commission was composed mostly of Griffuelhes's friends and, as a counterattack, was investigating Lévy's books. They were in good order but Merrheim kept insisting on questioning some data. Lévy became so furious that he threw a chair at Merrheim's head and injured his nose. The others subdued Lévy who, it turned out, was carrying a gun. Lévy then began to shout, 'You're not the one who discovered Ouenza [a mining scandal Merrheim wrote about] Go on your way and make up your articles, you ignoramus!' The meeting ended in complete disorder.⁵⁹

The Crisis, the CGT, and Merrheim to 1914

The CGT's difficulties became more severe during the years preceeding the war of 1914. And it could not hide its distress from public scrutiny. In 1910, the moral report written for the Congress of Toulouse stated that 'immediately after the Congress of Marseille one knew that the Confederal Committee would inevitably find itself in a state of malaise' and admitted frankly that personal antagonisms between CGT members became mixed up with issues of tactics and political viewpoints.⁶⁰ In 1910, the report continued, a strike of the postal workers failed because of insufficient support from other federations. The confederation blamed this setback on its own divisions. Delegates at the congress also heard that the government continued its repression against the CGT. To illustrate, after a 1910 May Day celebration in Rouen, the police temporarily detained Charles Marck, the new CGT treasurer and Léon Torton, the secretary of the Bourse du Travail of Rouen.⁶¹

More serious was the government's arrest of Jules Durand, secretary of the coal workers' union of Le Havre, for murder. In July 1910 the coal workers of Le Havre struck for a diminution of piece work.⁶² During the strike a nonunion worker, Dongé, became involved in a fight with several union men and was killed. The men responsible were imprisoned. Several days after the incident, however, the government also arrested Durand, claiming that the killing was premeditated and that Durand had provoked Dongé's death. The court agreed and sentenced Durand to death for 'moral complicity' in the crime.⁶³

The CGT was outraged, compared this case with the Dreyfus Affair, and proclaimed that the moment for 'platonic protests' was over.⁶⁴ Workers should defend themselves '*by all the means at our command*'.⁶⁵ Merrheim tried to involve metalworkers' locals in helping Durand but his meetings 'provoked neither interest, nor incident, nor troubles'.⁶⁶ Eventually the constant pressure by the CGT and a weak case by the government forced the president of the republic to commute the sentence to seven years in prison; by February 1911 even this sentence was dropped, and Durand was set free. The lesson of these events was not lost on the CGT, however.

Government repression dampened the spirit of the CGT. So did ideological fights that split its ranks. Worse still, debates over ideological principles frequently became the signals for outbursts of personal hostility. At the Congress of Le Havre, held in September 1912, Renard of the Federation of Textile Workers reopened the debate concerning the correct relationship between syndicalism and socialism. In his speech, he first attacked factionalism in the CGT, which, he noted, was spreading to the con-

federation's newspaper. He concluded that the working-class needs a political as well as an economic arm. Thus, he called for closer ties between the Socialist party and the CGT: 'We do not demand, we have never demanded that the activities of the two organizations get confused with each other or that one group subordinate itself to the other. No [...]. But we demand an end to a duality which is harmful to the interests of the proletariat'.⁶⁷ Merrheim argued against Renard and said that workers did not want rights that were built on top of capitalism or the state; rather, they wanted 'a new right created by the worker's own force in the middle of his struggles [...]; a right created by him for the transformation [of society] that we dream about'.⁶⁸ This was the classic revolutionary syndicalist attitude, which Merrheim, no matter what his practice, never abandoned. It was only that, in his daily activities as well as in his interpretation of the strength of the working class and his view of its chance for a revolution or even for very decisive action, he tended toward prudence and consequently counseled tactics that did not live up to his rhetoric. Consequently, on the issue of the CGT and the Socialist party, he sided with the revolutionary majority when the congress concluded that 'syndicalism, an offensive movement of the working class [...], affirms once more its decision to maintain its autonomy and its independence [...]'.⁶⁹

Despite this reaffirmation, Merrheim perceived another reality at the congress. Stagnation currently gripped the CGT, which he partly attributed to the lack of an overall plan of action. This, he argued, was a practical matter, which the confederation could rectify by focusing on concrete issues like a shorter work week. He also pointed to a more fundamental problem, however, when he stated that:

I must say that we are all suffering from the state of stagnation in which the CGT finds itself [...]. We therefore find ourselves in a crisis, which shall, however, produce a reaction, which shall cause syndicalism to enter upon a new road; this reaction shall impart to our activities an intensity that we have never known before, even in 1906.⁷⁰

Although his conclusion was confident, Merrheim did point to the profound difficulties revolutionary syndicalism was encountering. The CGT was constantly confronting a powerful and hostile capitalist state and economic system. Since it did so with divided ranks, it might only be a matter of time before its own transformation and not the state's became evident.

The last general meeting the CGT held before the war was the *Conférence Ordinaire des Fédérations Nationales et des Bourses du Travail* of July 13 to 15, 1913. There, too, the question of the CGT's orientation emerged. This happened over a mild argument concerning the correct rela-

tionship between the national federations, department unions, and the Bourse du Travail and in a more vehement debate over the government's plan to extend military service from two to three years. On the first topic Jouhaux suggested closer ties between the bourses and the federations, with each group still retaining considerable autonomy.⁷¹ Raymond Péricat of the Federation of Building Trades Workers, on the other hand, wanted 'the fusion of the two confederal organs' in order to ensure more effective work.⁷² He was referring to the Section des Fédérations and the Section des Bourses du Travail, the two administrative divisions of the CGT. Merrheim insisted that any collaboration between the groups respect their autonomy. Péricat's method, he said, would only lead to complete centralization.⁷³ Péricat answered that 'Merrheim has spoken of centralization. He waves that flag every time someone wants to change something'. He stated that real duality did not exist in any case and that a measure of centralization was natural. Centralization also existed in the Federation of Metalworkers, he concluded. Merrheim counterargued that strict centralization was contrary to the essence of syndicalism.⁷⁴ What he really feared, however, was that a bold activist like Péricat wished to convert the CGT to his style of daring leadership.

A similar argument took place once more, during the much more ardent debate concerning the CGT's attitude toward the new three year military law. The subject of the CGT and militarism is treated in Chapter 7. In this context, suffice it to say that the CGT's ranks were badly divided when the government announced its intention of extending military service from two to three years. Jouhaux proposed that syndicalists fight the new military law but avoided suggesting any specific tactics. Others at this meeting wanted the CGT to call a general strike to protest the new law. Merrheim was a vigorous supporter of Jouhaux's approach.⁷⁵

The conference adopted Jouhaux' position. Merrheim was not content to let matters rest. At the conference he had raised the issue of the very nature and direction of revolutionary syndicalism. He regretted the emphasis some delegates were putting on social action rather than corporate work. He wanted the CGT to focus more on strictly trade union issues. Consequently, after the conference, he stated his case in the syndicalist press. On July 30, 1913, he wrote an article in *La Bataille Syndicaliste*, which caused a considerable stir in the CGT. In it he indicated that revolutionary syndicalism was at a turning point in its history. It could become a social action movement, a political party, split and corrupt like all others, or it could continue its work of 'organization and methodical and audacious action [...]'. For my part my choice is made: I shall not stray from the line that I have followed since 1905'.⁷⁶ The July conference, he

concluded, had put the CGT back onto the correct road, a path it was beginning to leave under the impulse of social action types.

With this article Merrheim emerged as a major spokesman for a moderate and responsible CGT. He rejected political reformers to his right and vigorous social activists to his left. He favored instead purely economic action until the eventual revolution. At that time a majority of the confederation's leaders, Jouhaux included, shared this view.⁷⁷ The problem with Merrheim's notion is that in reality it was an excuse – albeit an unconscious one – for a reformist stance. Moreover, in times of relative economic and social calm, the confederation, following Merrheim's lead, began to engage in a trade unionism divorced from any revolutionary concerns. A handful of perceptive critics began to notice these developments and to take Merrheim to task for his ideas and example. Nowhere was this seen more dramatically than in his own federation.

CHAPTER 5

THE CRISIS IN THE FEDERATION OF METALWORKERS

During the years before World War I Alphonse Merrheim found himself in the middle of a crisis that wracked his own federation. After 1912, syndicalists, both inside and outside this organization, pointed to a sense of defeatism that pervaded the Federation of Metalworkers. They noted that a sense of purpose and determination seemed missing from the federation's activities. Many syndicalists blamed Merrheim for this state of affairs; they attacked his constant emphasis on trade union matters. This, they believed, had blunted the revolutionary will not only of the Federation of Metalworkers but of the CGT as well. So disenchanted did one metalworkers' local become, that it expelled Merrheim from its ranks, charging him with being too conservative and cautious.

Trade Unionism

Among Merrheim's typical trade union activities, none was more important nor more frustrating than his efforts to unite all metalworkers into one federation. It was a time consuming project, but he believed this task essential when he realized how powerfully united the different steel companies were. When he had first arrived in Paris in 1904, the Federation of Metalworkers consisted of steel- and copperworkers, although the latter formed a separate section. Although the federation had permitted this autonomy to entice the coppersmiths, it did state in 1903 that it looked forward someday to 'the complete fusion of the two organizations'.¹ The following year Albert Bouchet opined that nothing should stop 'the work of appeasement and union' between copper- and metalworkers.² The federation's 1905 congress, acting on Merrheim's proposal, 'sanctioned the definitive fusion of the section of Copperworkers with the Federal Union [of Metalworkers]'.³ More difficult, however, were Merrheim's endeavors to get the Federation of Iron Molders and Federation of Machinists, two craft organizations, to join with the expanded Federation of Metalworkers. He considered this task essential since concentration by the steel magnates resulted in a 'situation which makes it indispensable to create in each locali-

ty only one organization of metalworkers'.⁴

In September 1905, at the meeting of its twelfth annual congress, the Federation of Metalworkers announced confidently that its 'most exciting and coveted' goal was union with the iron molders and machinists. The metalworkers had taken an important step in that direction when, on December 18, 1904, their federation's Executive Committee chose five delegates to arrange an entente with the two craft federations. The Federation of Metalworkers also noted enthusiastically that the CGT favored peace among metalworkers and that the iron molders seemed predisposed to some kind of alliance. The Federation of Machinists, however, remained hostile to any kind of unity. Undaunted, the Federation of Metalworkers announced that it 'shall persist in its efforts to group under its wing all metalworkers regardless of craft; it does this in its goal of protecting the general well-being of all producers'.⁵

One particular development within the CGT aided the federation's objectives. The confederation's Congress of Amiens (1906) resolved that all building trades unions should combine into one federation.⁶ This order was the consequence of a general impulse in the CGT to establish industrial federations and also to avoid jurisdictional disputes among its members.

The Federation of Metalworkers was already working toward this end, but it experienced several setbacks along the way. The entente between the Federation of Metalworkers and the Federation of Iron Molders had broken down; Merrheim blamed the latter group.⁷ Later, at his federation's 1907 congress, he charged that the iron molders were reluctant to dissolve their own federation unless they could have a separate section within the Federation of Metalworkers. This demand Merrheim found absolutely incompatible with industrial unionism.⁸ Claude Sélaquet, chairman of the Commission d'Entente between the iron molders and metalworkers, agreed with this assessment. He proposed a resolution, which the congress accepted, that condemned the Federation of Iron Molders because it preferred 'to vegetate'. Simultaneously the Federation of Metalworkers announced that it welcomed as members any individual iron molders or iron molders' locals that wanted to join.⁹ To underscore its commitment to industrial unionism and its determination to unite all metalworkers, the 1907 congress amended its constitution by adding the following: 'Conforming to the fundamental principles of the Federal Union, each of its national sections and adhering unions promises to establish, where no organization exists, only unions that include all the professions and specialties of the steel industry'.¹⁰

Merrheim campaigned for unity in the pages of the syndicalist press and indicated, too, that the CGT would take up this issue.¹¹ In fact, the Union

des Syndicats des Ardennes formally proposed to the CGT that all metalworkers unite and that a special metalworkers' congress meet to accomplish this aim.¹² When this topic came up at the CGT's national Congress of Marseille (1908) several delegates who wished to guard their autonomous craft unions objected. But the congress ordered the Federations of Iron Molders, Machinists, and Metalworkers to combine within six months.¹³ Responding to the confederation's mandate, the Federations of Iron Molders and Metalworkers and five machinists' unions met during May 1909.¹⁴ Even then, however, the process was incomplete because the Federation of Machinists refused to join in the talks; the five machinists' unions that did join had to break away from their parent organization to do so. The intransigence of the Federation of Machinists caused consternation in both the CGT¹⁵ and in the Federation of Metalworkers,¹⁶ although the latter believed that what was left of the Federation of Machinists did not amount to much.¹⁷

Why was achieving unity so tortuous? Considerations of differing political tendencies between, and even within, the federations exacerbated the problem of craft versus industrial unionism. The Federation of Machinists and its leader, Pierre Coupât, tended toward reformism. Coupât also feared that his smaller organization would be swamped by the larger Federation of Metalworkers. He regretted, too, that the *Mécaniciens de la Seine* had split with him and supported the Ardennes union in favor of unity.¹⁸ Raoul Lenoir, secretary of the Federation of Iron Molders, had the same fear for the same reasons.¹⁹ He decided, however, for fusion because he realized that Jean Latapie, a co-secretary of the Federation of Metalworkers, leaned in the reformist direction and that the presence of the Iron Molders would enhance the latter's position. Moreover, Henri Galantus, another secretary of the Federation of Metalworkers, assured Lenoir of a co-secretary's position in the expanded federation. On the other hand, the Ardennes metalworkers voiced opposition to the entrance 'of too many functionaries', by which they meant reformers. These new members, they believed, could cause a general split between the reformers and the revolutionaries in the CGT.²⁰ Furthermore, ultrarevolutionaries – syndicalists who emphasized social rather than merely corporate action – challenged Merrheim's faction within the federation. At that time the *Syndicat des Ouvriers en Métaux de la Seine*, an ultra group, was trying to unite all steel workers in the Seine and Seine-et-Oise region, albeit within the Federation of Metalworkers. Although these efforts were unsuccessful, the Seine metalworkers, under the influence of their leader, Gaspard Ingweiller, caused some commotion by attacking the CGT's leadership for its timidity, while Ingweiller criticized Merrheim for not taking advantage of

a recent postal strike to forment a general strike.²¹

Merrheim, too, had more at stake in all this than is immediately apparent. The police thought that if he could settle the negotiations for unity to the advantage of his federation, this would be 'a step towards the secretary-generalship [of the CGT] or [if not] towards oblivion'.²² All of Merrheim's public behavior indicates that he would not undermine his friend Victor Griffuelhes, but the report is correct in detecting in Merrheim a desire to enhance his importance and reputation within the CGT. His very power within any new grouping of metalworkers was also on the line and he took care to guard it. The police reported, for instance, that Merrheim feared that an ill-prepared unity congress might result in some group or faction demanding the resignation of the current federation secretaries, by way, ostensibly, of providing new leadership for the new federation.²³ A change of stewardship, however, would most likely involve a modification in the federation's policy orientation, and this was something that Merrheim always fought. Consequently, throughout his career, he fiercely opposed any suggestions for any limitation of the term of office of a federation secretary and tenaciously held on to his own post.²⁴

The Illusion of Success

Such long and tedious administrative work characterized much of Merrheim's life at the helm of the Federation of Metalworkers and was an important factor in his drift toward reformism. For the moment, however, public data made it appear that the federation was especially successful. In 1903 it had 9,000 members; in 1905 that number had grown to 14,000, and after the unity congress in 1909 to over 16,000. In 1911, the figure stood at a pre-World War I high of 27,627.²⁵ More important than numbers – it was a relatively small federation – was the quality of its work and its leadership. Ever since the 1905 congress of the federation, syndicalists had been impressed by the vigor of all its trade union campaigns and efficient organization.²⁶

A minority, however, saw dangers ahead as the federation's leaders appeared overly concerned with administrative matters. Merrheim, too, was aware that all was not well and he referred to this period (1909) as a 'crisis of domestication!'²⁷ Hidden from public view, too, were the serious differences of the federation's secretaries concerning their respective conceptions of revolutionary syndicalism. Marius Blanchard leaned to the left and favored aggressive action; Latapie inclined toward reformism; Merrheim steered a middle course between these two poles. But trouble broke out

when Latapie was suspected of ties with the Ministry of the Interior and as Merrheim began a 'fierce campaign' against Latapie, Blanchard and Galantus.²⁸ So serious did the struggle for power become that in January 1909, Galantus and Latapie resigned their posts. Blanchard, who was having his own difficulties with a drinking problem, lost his bid for reelection in 1909.²⁹ Even before Blanchard's defeat, the police estimated that Merrheim was the sole director of the Federation of Metalworkers.³⁰

Not too many years after this triumph, the federation's fortunes took a downward turn. The dividing line, the time when a sense of crisis spilled out into the open, was the year 1912. For one thing, membership in the federation began to drop, and, second, the federation's strikes increasingly began to fail. In 1911, the federation's membership rolls were at their highest – 27,627 workers. In 1912 this membership fell to 27,228. By 1913, only 24,896 workers were members of the federation.³¹ Similarly between 1901 and 1903 the federation had participated in 26 strikes involving 2,894 workers; 14 succeeded, 6 ended in compromise, and 5 failed completely. These figures increased between 1903 and 1905 to 60 strikes, comprising 10,302 workers. Of these 27 succeeded, 25 were resolved by compromise, while 8 failed.³² The negative trend became fully apparent during the next period. Between 1905 and 1907, 114 strikes broke out in the metallurgical industry with 55,857 workers participating. The federation judged that 22 of these strikes had succeeded, but that 59 had ended by compromise and 30 had failed outright.³³ Although the person recording this information for the federation made a small error in his calculations – the number of strikes which succeeded, failed and ended by compromise adds up to 111 rather than 114 – the central conclusion remains valid.

In the face of these developments, the federation held a congress in 1913. There, the delegates heard a report Merrheim had prepared expressing great disappointment concerning the drop in membership. A principal cause of this phenomenon was 'the atmosphere of mistrust, of mutual suspicion [...] that divides syndicalism into hostile clans [...]'. Other factors were the lack of financial resources, a weak sense of solidarity among many locals, and government repression.³⁴ Bouchet believed that 'syndicalism is experiencing a double crisis: a crisis of recruitment [...] and a crisis of direction'.³⁵ He also blamed government restraints and the fact that 'the employers also have taken their precautions for the battle and have perfected their means of defense'. As all metalworkers knew, he was referring to the employers' trust. 'In our own metallurgical industry, where workers are organized, the French employer has established the most formidable organization that exists [...]. He has set up against us one of the most excessive police organizations'. Its files on the worker's private life

as well as on his work habits and activities, Bouchet continued, follow the person throughout his years from one corner of France to another: 'an odious system of secret file cards'.³⁶

At this congress Bouchet also defended the stand that Merrheim had taken at the CGT's 1913 *Conférence ordinaire des Fédérations nationales et des Bourses du Travail*. 'The syndicalist movement as we have understood it, comrades, must remain outside the parliamentary spirit [...]', he said.³⁷ Another delegate, Maurice Hager of Anzin, however, challenged Merrheim to explain exactly what he meant at the 1913 conference when he accused other CGT leaders of having abandoned their principles.³⁸ Merrheim rose to the attack, defended and explained his actions, and defined his concept of revolutionary syndicalism as well. Since the debate at the 1913 conference involved militarism, Merrheim commented that he had always fought militarism, but always within the context of revolutionary syndicalist tendencies and not in a 'deviation towards insurrectionalism', which is how he characterized the proposal made at the 1913 conference for a general strike to protest the new military law. An ill-conceived and unprepared strike, primarily for political purposes, he believed, had precipitated a crisis in revolutionary syndicalism.³⁹

In his general analysis, Merrheim dated the general crisis affecting revolutionary syndicalism from the end of 1906. The movement should have taken stock of itself then: 'since 1906 the activists have not sufficiently understood that it was necessary for the working class to rest a little. If one condemned us to work perpetually, without rest, you would not be able to resist, and you would end up dead. That is what you have done in leaving the syndicalist movement to irresponsible types'.⁴⁰ He added that the strike of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges had been inopportune; the CGT had entered the conflict against its own better judgement with disastrous consequences. Merrheim found it ironic that following the check of this strike local unions blamed the CGT's directors. From the time of this strike 'One had sowed the seed of doubt in the working class [...]; the syndicalist movement had deviated from its true path because of personal conflicts concerning the *Maison des Fédérations* affair. That is one of the causes and the real point of departure of the malaise that we have experienced and of the atrophy in which we currently find ourselves'.⁴¹

Moreover the state of the Confederation headquarters was dreadful:

Thus, after Marseille the CGT lacked the direction of the man [...] who had been its soul [Griffuelhes], the man who had been killed morally with slanders and lies. Niel came, then Jouhaux. Jouhaux had to acquire experience, knowledge of the organization and of the membership, and at the same time bear the brunt of all the quarrels and past errors. Consequently it came to pass that the headquarters of the syndicalist movement [...] was no longer under the control of the activist syn-

dicalists, nor under the influence of the syndicalist organizations, but under sway of unorganized people, always irresponsible, who committed any acts that simply pleased them.⁴²

At the end of this speech Jouhaux, an observer at the congress, interrupted the debate to support Merrheim. The congress, too, backed Merrheim. It voted 147 to 1 with 4 abstentions to approve Merrheim's stance.⁴³

The congress then went beyond the issue of Merrheim's statements in 1913 to discuss the very nature and direction of revolutionary syndicalism. One metalworker called for greater organizational efforts among the young; then 'we shall have activists'.⁴⁴ Another delegate believed that union leaders 'should not begin their work by speaking to individuals about revolution'; rather, they should stress matters easily grasped by workers, like salaries and work site conditions. The leaders also should never undertake 'premature struggles, ones without preparation'.⁴⁵ When Bourchet spoke, he bemoaned the lack of activists and regretted the disuse of an old revolutionary syndicalist tactic, namely sending a secretary out to a region for a long period to organize it.⁴⁶

Merrheim agreed with this observation, and explained his own difficulties in propaganda tours, especially in the Nord: 'Each evening I would hurry about local places and there – because there was no railroad – I took to riding a bicycle. I would arrive each evening in some small village to find what? Ten or twelve metallurgists at the meeting'. Obviously disappointed, he returned nevertheless, but his organizational efforts would fall apart when he departed. Still, 'we are not discouraged and, in the Nord above all, if the political divisions could stop we could do a marvelous job [...]'.⁴⁷

Merrheim had very firm and precise ideas about the nature of revolutionary syndicalism. At the 1913 congress, one delegate, Benoît Liother, called for a new syndicalist education, one that was 'moral' and 'philosophical' as well as professional. 'Syndicalism must not be only corporate; it must be antiparliamentarian, antimilitarist, internationalist, and above all antistatist'. Syndicalism must be 'complete and integral', by which he meant a syndicalism engaged in social and political as well as economic activity. He made this suggestion in order to counter a trend in revolutionary syndicalism toward greater professionalism.⁴⁸ Merrheim rightly interpreted this as an attack on his style of leadership. Syndicalism, he stated, should eschew quixotic or insurrectionalist actions, which could be interpreted to mean practically any vigorous social endeavors. The syndicalist movement was antistatist, antiparliamentary, antipatriotic, and antimilitarist, but not exclusively so. Moreover, classic revolutionary syndicalism had no connection with political parties, for this meant refor-

mism. Syndicalism also organized workers for a revolutionary education, which, however, existed within the context of the worker's total experience with his job and his government. Thus antimilitarism was a constant, daily struggle, a matter of demonstrating to the worker that soldiers intervene in strikes. Merrheim distinguished this from an 'insurrectional' act against the military, which he felt had no permanent value. What counted most was education, the inculcation by concrete examples of revolutionary notions into the workers' consciousness. Speaking once more of the antimilitarist example, he rejected those syndicalists who would have workers participate in an antimilitarist act for its own sake, forgetting its context, which was the organization and education of an autonomous, self-sufficient working-class movement.⁴⁹ What Merrheim could not understand, however, was that his own framework was a trade unionism divorced from real revolutionary concerns. Taking his own example of antimilitarism, it is apparent that for him an antimilitarist campaign should lead to a stronger sense of cohesion in the unions rather than to a revolution against the state. To paraphrase Merrheim, the tangible examples of capitalist exploitation should lead to a revolutionary consciousness; but he postponed any revolutionary effort indefinitely. This was the real meaning of his ideas.

The Griffuelhes Critique

The syndicalist who saw most clearly the implicit dangers for revolutionary syndicalism of Merrheim's attitude was Griffuelhes. In 1913, he opened a subtle critique of the reformist direction in which the CGT was moving and used the Federation of Metalworkers as a case in point.⁵⁰ The challenge to Merrheim could not be too frontal or direct because Merrheim himself was an outspoken critic of official reformism. Griffuelhes began with an overview of the present state of the syndicalist movement. 'There reigns in the syndicalist world a deplorable disposition and a profound ignorance of the necessities of action; [...] the syndicalist idea has lost its force and its vigor. [...] the syndicalist movement is undergoing a profound crisis which could be fatal'.⁵¹ He also pointed to a return to corporatism and counseled more creative and less bureaucratic action, an indirect reference to Merrheim's style.

Griffuelhes harked back to traditional revolutionary syndicalist ideas. He warned: 'Let us not forget that the value of syndicalism is not found in pure negation or in continuous criticism, but, on the contrary, in the creation of notions, of conceptions conforming to the aspirations of the

proletariat [...]'.⁵² The syndicalist movement, he believed, had gotten away from its roots. Workers had been paying too much attention to the political milieux. They must turn to their own resources and traditions; the activists must lead and the workers should follow.

There was nothing here with which Merrheim could find fault. Yet Griffuelhes believed that Merrheim's interpretation of the traditional revolutionary syndicalist concepts changed their thrust and direction in an unobvious manner. Griffuelhes noted that the Federation of Metalworkers, in the name of federalism and revolution, was simply centralizing its structure and extending a tighter control over its local unions. This was bad because 'I have always believed that federalism signified the coordination of action guided by the autonomous groups and not the concentration of these groups'.⁵³ He had advocated, along with Merrheim, the unity of different trades belonging to the same industry. Their complete fusion into a federation, however, would stifle the creative energy that comes from the rank-and-file. As a typical revolutionary syndicalist, he relied on the leadership role of the activists but someone like Merrheim was steering the movement in a reformist direction. Rather than attack Merrheim directly, something which could lead to a personality clash and no change, he chose to focus on institutional changes and concepts and interpreted these in a very traditional manner. He thus would force Merrheim to deal with concrete issues rather than an abstract debate about direction, in which the latter would simply claim to be revolutionary.

In this context, Griffuelhes asked a rhetorical question: what is the revolutionary syndicalist movement? His answer was that it was an offensive movement. Its primary function was not to conserve acquired gains or to react to provocations. It does keep its advantages but does not focus on them or turn them into goals.⁵⁴ This, too, was an indirect attack against Merrheim, who had never abandoned his revolutionary goals, but was spending an enormous amount of energy and time in advancing trade union matters.

Griffuelhes concluded his public lecture by noting that 'there is around us an industrial concentration, but we must not confuse this with employer concentration. We must guard ourselves not to be hypnotized before the latter, nor to give employer concentration an exaggerated importance, capable of weakening our enthusiasm and our faith'.⁵⁵ Merrheim had built most of his theory of syndicalist action upon the existence of employers' trusts in the steel industry. Griffuelhes never denied the power of these associations, but was calling Merrheim to task for a shift away from revolutionary aims because of their presence.

Merrheim's response to Griffuelhes was artful and remained on the same

high plane as the latter's argument.⁵⁶ He did not deny Griffuelhes's facts concerning the direction of the Federation of Metalworkers or the general malaise besetting the CGT. In fact, he agreed. He merely interpreted the causes differently. He also agreed with Griffuelhes's goals, but suggested a different manner in which they might be achieved. Throughout, he rested his case on as many personal experiences and examples as possible. He began his defense by noting that Griffuelhes himself had supported the unity of the metalworkers in 1909. He then went into a fairly lengthy discussion of the effectiveness of uniting separate trades in the steel industry when it was a question of a strike action. Permitting separate unions or federations of steel workers in different industries, such as the automobile or naval construction industries, would ultimately lead to unions for individual factories.⁵⁷ He concluded this argument with the belief that the unity of the metalworkers was a sign of vitality. There was something disingenuous, however, in his implication that Griffuelhes was suggesting decentralization among the metalworkers. The latter, too, favored coordination of action throughout an industry, but was simply against the strict kind of control and centralization practiced by Merrheim, since that ultimately meant the imposition over the rank-and-file of whatever negative attitudes existed at the top.

When Merrheim confronted Griffuelhes's charge that he confused industrial and employer concentration, he framed the accusation in a slightly different manner than it was originally presented and then argued for his interpretation of the issue. Griffuelhes, merely did not want syndicalists to become overwhelmed by the existence of trusts and cartels; he never meant to imply that such cartels did not exist or were not important. Merrheim, on the other hand, only provided a dissertation on the existence of these cartels and concluded that workers had to have their own organization to be able to conquer the employers.⁵⁸ He sounded revolutionary but missed the point of Griffuelhes's argument.

Merrheim emerged from this debate still sounding as if he was prepared to do battle with the employers and as if he simply differed in his methods from his critics. Some syndicalists, however, saw through this facade. Within the Federation of Metalworkers opposition grew on the left and challenged Merrheim. This opposition was centered in the Union of the Seine Metalworkers, headed by Ingweiler. The latter found Merrheim too reformist as well as authoritarian. He preferred to appeal to hitherto unorganized workers in the automobile industry as the basis for the federation's campaigns.⁵⁹ Consequently Ingweiler led an attack against Merrheim at the federations's 1913 Congress.⁶⁰ When that failed, Ingweiler had Merrheim expelled from the Seine local, which Merrheim had joined when

he came to Paris in 1904.⁶¹ The federation, in turn, ousted this local and formed another in the Seine region. However, the ‘expulsion case’ was a severe blow to Merrheim’s ego, and another serious sign of the crisis in the CGT.⁶² To some extent, the intellectual basis for that crisis was laid by Merrheim’s ideological development, which is the subject of Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

**MERRHEIM'S INTELLECTUAL FORMATION. THE
JUSTIFICATION FOR REFORMISM**

While Alphonse Merrheim ran his own union and conducted confederation business, he found time for an enormous intellectual output, which is no less remarkable considering he was a complete autodidact. His intellectual contribution is a highly original and richly documented addition to revolutionary syndicalist ideology. What he emphasized time and again, in article after article, and finally in an important book, was the need for syndicalists to educate themselves on the nature of the capitalist system and simultaneously to follow the capitalists' example and organize efficiently and powerfully before they attempted any social revolution. Fernand Pelloutier had spoken for the need to educate workers before Merrheim, but no other syndicalist insisted on as thorough an education and preparation for revolution as did the latter.¹ Merrheim pressed his conclusions with an intensely single-minded purpose through such painstakingly researched studies that his case seemed unimpeachable; and his judgments remained remarkably consistent, even in the face of fundamentally altered circumstances. Centrally situated in the CGT, a confidant of Léon Jouhaux, Merrheim convinced many others in the revolutionary syndicalist movement that his outlook was correct.

His mature studies – articles that combined a point of view, careful documentation, and a clear vision of the interconnections of the capitalist system – began to appear at the end of 1907. By 1913, Merrheim was the CGT's resident expert on capitalism. His oeuvre fell into two large categories: investigations of industrial-labor relations, and theoretical conclusions on the nature of revolutionary syndicalism. His study of the Comité des Forges utilizing both approaches, stands apart by virtue of its uniqueness and importance. It is the summation of his discoveries and ideas about capitalism and his major intellectual achievement.

Charges of Fraud

Before turning to these studies, however, it is important to note that Merr-

heim was followed throughout his life by charges that he plagiarized many of his trade union articles. This accusation is worth exploring because it provides an insight into what propelled him to combine constant writing with his other activities as a trade union leader.²

Increasingly from 1908 on, syndicalists attacked Merrheim both for not composing his own articles and for enlisting the assistance of middle-class intellectuals in their preparation. A police spy reported the slur precisely:

'One knows, and one can prove, that Merrheim does not write his own articles. He is, in effect, devoid of learning and besides does not have the time to write all that he signs, and especially to research his material. One suspects above all M. Delaisi (11, rue de Navarre) of providing the documentation, but that's all that one can put forward.'

The same agent stated that Merrheim's campaign against the Ouenza mining concessions, where the French government granted the right to exploit Algerian mines to foreign interests, was 'suspect' because on this issue Merrheim was in close touch with the middle class – again Francis Delaisi is singled out – and was essentially their 'master singer'.³ The report meant that Merrheim seemed to be representing the interests of certain French capitalists by his attacks against the French government. On another occasion a fellow syndicalist charged that he saw Merrheim's articles on Ouenza; one was covered by corrections made by Pierre Monatte, and the other, handed in for publication, was 'absolutely impeccable'. The first was the one Merrheim wrote and the second the one Monatte corrected. This critic, too, attributed most of Merrheim's articles to his 'unconfessed collaboration' with Delaisi and other middle class intellectuals.⁴

On occasion the rumor mill prominently mentioned Maxime Leroy, another middle-class intellectual who identified with the cause of the working class, as a possible source of Merrheim's studies. Yet in a private letter to Leroy Merrheim wrote:

I would not think that one could attribute the paternity of my articles to you. [...] when I first arrived in Paris I did not hide the fact that we knew each other and that I asked you for some legal advice, especially concerning the project of a collective contract that I had settled at Amiens; but that is where our connections stopped.⁵

Merrheim never responded to these widely circulating criticisms publicly, and there is not enough information to verify the extent to which he did or did not have some assistance in writing his articles. However, the charges surfaced at the height of the syndicalist crisis and were leveled at him by his political enemies within the CGT and his own federation. This certainly explains the motivation and timing behind them. Moreover, he

was the first to admit that he frequently relied on middle-class intellectuals for information and ideas. He gave credit especially to Delaisi for explaining the operations of the Comptoir de Longwy, the steel cartel among Longwy steel barons, and for documenting the process of concentration among the steel barons, information he used for *L'Organisation patronale*.⁶

Concerning the Ouenza study, Merrheim provided the fullest account ever of how he came to write a series of articles.⁷ In the process he also inadvertently revealed why he was vulnerable to charges of representing the middle class in the Ouenza Affair. In January 1908 he had gone to the Longwy region on a propaganda mission for his federation. There he met a stranger, whom he never named but whom he ascertained was an engineer. The latter advised Merrheim to check into the government's plans for the Ouenza mines, the government-owned Algerian iron mines. Back in Paris, he followed this advice and discovered that private deals existed between foreign investors, some French companies, and the French government. He followed this revelation with a series of sensational articles exposing a widespread scandal of private exploitation in which the government had granted mining concessions to one French company and some foreign concerns against the interests of another French company.⁸ Georges Clemenceau, who had a brother working as a lawyer for the company that had obtained the government contract, probably had a hand in this, according to Merrheim.

What is puzzling is Merrheim's conversation with the engineer. Why would a total stranger advise Merrheim? Could the engineer have been working for the mining company that lost the concession and wanted the whole matter exposed? It seems likely. Yet why did not Merrheim mistrust this source of information? Why was there no speculation concerning motives? The answer lies in both Merrheim's naive enthusiasm and his trade union sense. In the first place, he did not attempt to hide the source of his information. Second, once onto the story, he was so taken up with the affair itself, that he did not consider that others might be using his investigative reporting for their own ends. In one sense that did not matter, since Merrheim did unearth the chicaneries of capitalists. But there was also an element of pure trade unionism involved in his exposé. He resented the fact that French wealth benefited foreign capitalists and that French workers were not receiving adequate rewards or protection for their labor in Ouenza, or enough of the jobs in the mines. He almost seemed to be saying that these mines should be worked only by French capitalists in order to benefit French laborers.⁹ This interpretation of the workers' immediate material needs could conflict with a revolutionary attitude toward the state.

Merrheim arrived at his own expertise modestly and with a great deal of hard work. Leroy wrote:

He is the most curious autodidact that I have ever met; very energetic, he never ceases to perfect himself, learning a great deal, taking care of his spelling and improving his style. In his last years he became an excellent dialectician, very knowledgeable, capable of leading to the very end a conversation with men who, more happily than he, had been able to begin their studies in their youth.

Leroy also fondly reminisced that Merrheim 'loved his books' and was constantly consulting them, especially his Larousse dictionary, checking it for 'a date, a spelling, a definition, a book title'.¹⁰ Leroy even benefited from Merrheim's search for facts. The former was preparing *La Coutume ouvrière*. A friend introduced him to Merrheim as an excellent source of information.¹¹ Another friend, Marcel Hasfeld, described Merrheim's library in Paris, at 14, rue de la Prevoyance, in a working-class quarter in the northeastern part of the city. The library consisted largely of dictionaries and administrative council reports, the kind of information Merrheim preferred and trusted.¹²

This is quite understandable since Merrheim's position as a labor leader required a technical understanding of capitalism in general and the steel industry in particular. At Hennebont, his own shortcomings had become obvious to him. At that time he found a company engineer's financial accounts completely baffling. He recalled reading François Delaisi and sought him out for assistance.¹³ The two men began a fruitful collaboration, which lasted until 1913.¹⁴ Merrheim's sole aim was to learn how the economy operated and to share his knowledge with other workers.

Early Ideas

Merrheim's earliest articles, the ones he wrote before 1904, do not study the capitalist system in toto, but are either reports of strikes or general expressions of the revolutionary syndicalist attitude toward existing society. They are valuable because they show that very early the author had absorbed the revolutionary syndicalist rhetoric and sense of hostility to the state and all political parties. They also demonstrate that his traditional revolutionary syndicalist views were taking on a subtle contour that bent them to his cautious and methodical personality. Once he wrote that for the worker 'the only resource is in himself, his only force is in the trade union'.¹⁵ He advised workers to direct all their will and energy toward their federations. He constantly repeated this central notion that workers develop their own independent culture, force, unions, and leaders, with no

guidance from non-union workers or socialists. 'Don't forget that the best means of conserving acquired results is to remain united and especially to make your union even stronger by attending meetings'. In one early exhortation to his rank-and-file, he criticized both company unions and the socialists. Socialists, he believed, blocked the revolutionary path for workers by taking part in the political process: 'Let us have enough courage, enough will power, to take care of our own affairs'.¹⁶

It followed that Merrheim disdained laws passed by politicians, especially since such legislation generally harmed the workers' movement. In writing about a Waldeck-Millerand proposal for legislation on the arbitration of labor disputes, he remarked sarcastically that the government was not about to come out against capitalism.¹⁷ Arbitration laws, he explained, would only force workers to negotiate and they would be interpreted by magistrates against workers, thus generally debilitating the revolutionary syndicalist movement. Compulsory arbitration was a means of granting some workers' demands but at the expense of the general strike, he wrote. The 'capitalist and government class [constantly] affirms that when it is a question of workers, it is not only incapable of generosity and humanity, but even of justice'. Arbitration is a hoax, a cloak behind which the government only increases its repression. Workers, he concluded, 'must always remember that [...] all rapprochement between capital and labor is impossible'.¹⁸ Rather than accept middle-class laws, 'it is necessary to unite our efforts to sweep away, to annihilate this old antiquated baggage; the laws are all armed against us'.¹⁹

Despite this attitude, revolutionary syndicalists did believe that workers could 'demand' laws, as long they did not petition political parties to obtain ameliorations. Laws that syndicalists obtained through forceful action – strikes, for instance – were considered legitimate. Laws were acceptable only when workers were strong enough to impose them.²⁰ Yet this perspective could lead workers to focus their attention on legal relief at the expense of agitating and planning for a revolution. Merrheim gave credence to this possibility, albeit inadvertently, when he spoke to a group of workers enrolled in a 'popular university' course. There he explained flatly that he was not opposed to all laws that the government presented to workers; he would first judge what each proposal would accomplish. In the rest of his speech he stated that historically middle-class laws defended only middle-class interests and that only a social revolution would correct this situation. Still, a significant opening existed for letting the revolutionary guard down, one that became more pronounced throughout the years.²¹

On this last point one more example is appropriate, because it demonstrates that Merrheim's apparent willingness to work with the state

in the workers' interests was no aberration but an integral part of his program. In 1907 the government was considering some mining concessions to private companies. Merrheim advised that if the state could not nationalize the soil, then it should only grant concessions if they were accompanied by pledges from the private firms to maintain decent hours and good wages for the workers. Concluding, however, that the state had no desire to heed the workers' advice, he wrote that 'It is the principle of capitalist property, which strangles and muzzles the proletariat, that is at play here'. Consequently only a total revolution shall provide 'the definitive solution'.²² But what if the government had guaranteed this small reform? Was not Merrheim setting up a condition by which he might agree in the future to an accommodation with the existing system? Since the government remained generally hostile to the workers' claims up to World War I, the point remained moot. But the situation changed significantly during and after the Great War.

Merrheim expressed similar nuances concerning the general strike. Like all revolutionary syndicalists, he accepted this weapon. For him, the general strike was the very moment of the final revolution, the spontaneous uprising of the working class for which he aimed.²³ He doubted, however, whether even partial strikes, no less the general strike, would ever succeed given the amount of preparation and education the working class still required. In any case, he generally preferred controlled and well-planned events. Workers should organize for 'sane revolts', they should group themselves 'solidly in the union, [and] support without qualification those who have assumed the heavy task of directing us [...]'.²⁴ As for the general strike, Merrheim was quite pleased that the CGT's 1900 Congress of Paris adopted this tactic but 'thought with just reason that the education of the masses was not sufficiently advanced to try, with any chance for success, such an important movement'.²⁵ He wrote this in an early period (1901) in the history of revolutionary syndicalism, but his negative attitude toward the workers' capacity and caution toward the general strike never changed.

By the end of this formative period Merrheim had articulated two ideas that were his central and original contribution to revolutionary syndicalist attitudes and beliefs. First, he believed that the corrective for the inadequacies of the workers' movement was '*education*', which was the tool for '*emancipation*'.²⁶ Second, he insisted upon material organization and union strength as an essential corollary to the 'moral effort' workers would bring to their emancipatory endeavors. 'For too long a time we have let ourselves believe that our emancipation only requires a moral effort. The facts demonstrate to us that, although the moral effort is always supreme, it is false to pretend that the pecuniary effort does not have its *raison d'être*

[...].²⁷ This succinct statement sums up an essential part of Merrheim's viewpoint. He constantly called upon the workers to organize into unions, remain loyal to their organizations, and obey their leaders. Once in Paris, he added impressive documentation and a theory of capitalism to support this position.

L'Organization patronale/La Métallurgie

Merrheim once admitted that when he first became a secretary of the Federation of Metalworkers he was terribly naive about the condition of the workers' movement and the strength of the capitalists. 'I was at that time far from suspecting the formidable employers' organization [...]. When leaving the factory at Roubaix, where I worked as a coppersmith, I brought with me all the illusions that a militant could accumulate in his provincial corner; illusions on the form and revolutionary climate of the working class movement'. Events he experienced after coming to Paris in 1904, however, would transform him. He participated in three major strikes and began attending the CGT's national congresses. For too long activists had believed that a detailed and deep knowledge of 'the economic milieu in which we struggle' was unnecessary. Experience convinced him that the revolutionary activity of the workers must be based upon something tangible in order to succeed. He believed 'that the proletariat shall be powerless while it remained ignorant of the real force of those who held it so strongly in check'.²⁸

To make himself into an effective labor leader, overcome his own ignorance, and provide the workers' movement with a firm foundation in knowledge, therefore, Merrheim began a systematic study of capitalism, especially its operations in the steel industry. At the time, he had available to him the many studies by Delaisi and others in *Pages Libres*.²⁹

Merrheim's researches culminated in three major monographs on the steel industry.³⁰ They are, *L'Organisation patronale. Syndicats, comités régionaux, ententes et comptoirs, assurance contre les grèves*, a short pamphlet with no publication date, but that appeared in 1908; 'L'Organisation patronale en France', a series of articles that appeared in the syndicalist journal *Le Mouvement Socialiste* from July 1908 to December 1909; and *La Métallurgie. Son Origine et son développement. Les Forces motrices*, his long book of 1913, which expands on the two previous works.³¹ These publications form one unified whole and may be discussed from that perspective.

He began his work by explaining its *raison d'être*, which also sums up

his revolutionary syndicalist philosophy. First, using the steel industry as a case study, he listed the several developments that he believed constituted the essential problems workers would continue to face during the twentieth century. These problems included the greater concentration of the employer class and its firms, the growing international accords between industrialists, the development of trusts and cartels and their powerful influence over governments. As a consequence workers could no longer assault the capitalist forces head-on, or from behind barricades. Nor, for that matter, could they even obtain simple relief with mass demonstrations or partial strikes. Twentieth century capitalism was too powerful, too complex for that. Merrheim's own words describe best what the workers had to do:

To act is to live. To live means to struggle. To struggle one must study and know the forces of the adversary. That is true especially for the worker. The worker must fight if he wants to maintain and augment his salary, diminish his working hours, raise his material well-being; in short, if the working class wishes to acquire moral independence and the necessary capacity to permit it to seize the instruments of production. Workers, either alone or in groups, must agitate and struggle. Above all workers must constantly resist the organized capitalist forces that tend to dismiss them, and to keep them in misery and servitude.

For this task, courage, energy, and will power are not enough. The worker must be well informed. The working class would ridicule with a host of sarcasms an army that would throw itself into battle without examining in advance the tactics and the resources of the enemy. Yet that is what the proletariat does most of the time.

In effect, what most frequently paralyzes the workers' action is ignorance of the employer's methods of operation. Employers, during the last few years, especially in the steel industry, have organized formidably. Consequently, if metalworkers want to fight the employer on equal terms, they must first know him.³²

Knowing the real power of the enemy, Merrheim believed, workers would acquire 'a new energy' that would permit them 'to struggle patiently but surely'.³³

One reason, therefore, that Merrheim wrote his study of the steel industry was to provide workers with the data necessary to build their union movement realistically and solidly. Another was that knowledge would permit a social transformation leading to socialism and the control of the new society by the workers themselves. The forceful takeover of tools was useless if, in turn, those tools were not guided by an intelligence, he wrote.

Would the working class have enough courage to spill its blood for the conquest of the factory, in addition to making an effort for the necessary management of that factory? If the answer is yes, it means the definitive emancipation of the workers, the well-being and liberty acquired by the producer in the regenerated world. If not [...] it means the rapid decline toward barbarism and servitude.

In turn, the moral transformation of the working class and the establish-

ment of a new society meant the salvation 'of civilization and of the world'.³⁴

Another impulse also drove Merrheim to stress education. He mourned the loss of craftsmanship and pride in labor and was thus trying, in the industrial society, to recapture a sense of the old artisanal attitude toward work through education. Education would impart to the laborer an idea of his high worth and the value of his productive enterprise. This was imperative since 'Industrialization diminishes initiative, lessens the capacity and personal value of workers [...]'. He regretted, too, the disappearance of the small workshop and its replacement with 'immense metallurgical factories', for 'as soon as the individual enters the immense factory, he has the impression that his personality has disappeared'.³⁵ Merrheim's sense of alienation was complete and his critique thorough. He attacked, also, mechanization, which was making labor more specialized while it simultaneously brutalized workers. This process, he wrote, in addition destroyed the system of apprentices, separated families, forced workers to labor long hours, and depressed wages while production increased. 'In effect, industrialization and its development forces employers to produce quickly, in great quantities and especially cheaply. To accomplish this the industrialists tend always to develop mechanization to intensify production. And modern mechanization requires not 'apprenticeship' but 'specialization''.³⁶ For Merrheim 'apprenticeship' meant the acquisition of skills so that the skilled worker, like the artisan of yesteryear, could derive dignity and pride from his craft. The worker concentrating on one task, on the other hand, lost not only his skills and pride but also his ability to defend himself against exploitation. The tragic, logical end of mechanization and industrialization was that capitalists tied workers to machines and regarded human labor as an extension of the machine, a mere cog in the assembly line.

The latter development was no idle speculation, for in the years just before World War I, some French industrialists began to introduce Taylorism into their plants. Taylorism was an industrial time-motion system that took its name from its American inventor, the engineer Frederick Winslow Taylor. The basic idea behind this system of 'scientific management' was for engineers to design a scientific method of work in which no time or effort is lost by man or machine in the production process. Engineers would construct new tools and machines, redefine the work space, and plan all these elements to fit around the ideal worker's capacity and construction. The aim was the rational organization of labor and the productive forces. The result would be a kind of symbiosis between man and machine and the increase of their mutual productive capacity. 'Scien-

tific management', according to Taylor, should also result in harmony between employers and workers as they all would operate within a rational and orderly work environment.³⁷

Louis Renault was among the first of the French industrialists to introduce the principles of Taylorism into his plants. In 1908 he and his engineer Georges de Ram tried out this system in a small plant with approximately 150 workers. They were pleased with the results and the following year decided to introduce Taylorism in all the Renault factories. The conversion could not be carried out quickly, however, and it was only in 1912 that Renault undertook to accelerate the process of bringing Taylorism to his enterprise. In November he established timekeepers to determine and control an increased pace of work in a quarter of his shops. Thousands of non-union workers responded with a strike on December 4. The following day Renault and the strikers agreed that workers could have a voice in the application of a system of time-keepers. Another strike broke out in February 1913, however, when Renault failed to keep his promise to consult workers about the introduction of Taylorism. The basic cause of this and the previous strike was not the opposition of workers to Taylorism per se but rather Renault's failure to heed Taylor's advice to plan the introduction of 'scientific management' carefully. Renault applied time-keepers too rapidly. He also did not have competent personnel to carry out his plans.³⁸ Moreover, the workers resented the virtual insertion of piece-work into the plants under the cover of Taylorism. This was the consequence of setting the time-motion studies on the fastest workers who were also given a financial bonus for their efforts.

Merrheim understood the spontaneous reaction of the Renault workers. Among the leaders of the CGT, he was one of the revolutionary syndicalists 'most keenly offended by Taylorism and one of its most ardent opponents [...]'.³⁹ He published his first systematic investigation of Taylorism barely one month after the February strike.⁴⁰ Writing in *La Vie Ouvrière* in March 1913, Merrheim analyzed Taylorism and concluded that it was simply 'the most ferocious, the most barbaric' system of work devised by the capitalists.⁴¹ He complained that time-motion studies reduced the professional value of the worker and replaced it with the 'mathematical productivity of individuals'.⁴² Moreover, since Taylorism measured the best workers, Merrheim feared this would eliminate the ordinary, average worker. It was true that workers could receive higher salaries since they could produce more, but the companies received an even higher rate of profit. Furthermore, a worker submitting himself to the demands of time-motion studies participated in his own brutalization, Merrheim wrote.⁴³ He concluded that

the personality, the intelligence, the very desires of the worker are erased, annihilated, banished from the workshops and factories. All his thoughts, all his gestures are 'modelled', constantly bent around the machine and its movements [...]. The worker must become, in fact, he has become a robot ruled by the automatic movements of the machines [...]. His personality and his initiative must disappear; in fact, they have disappeared.⁴⁴

One syndicalist, however, challenged Merrheim's very negative assessment of Taylorism. Jules Raveté belonged to the anarchist wing of the syndicalist movement and was active in Roanne (Loire). Self educated and very active in establishing workers' education courses, Raveté defended Taylorism in *La Vie Ouvrière*, the same forum Merrheim used to attack the time-motion concepts.⁴⁵ Rather than focus on the misapplication of Taylorism by someone like Louis Renault, Raveté explored the beneficial aspects of the new work system. His basic point was that the 'scientific organization of work [...] will permit an increase in production, an economy of the workers' energy, and thus will avoid the mental and physical strain that is a by-product of large-scale industry'.⁴⁶ Raveté stressed that Taylorism introduces rationality into the work process. As a consequence, workers will become more free and not bound to the machines, he believed. The average worker, moreover, will become a better worker under Taylorism. Raveté also believed that since Taylorism will maximize production and increase the productive capacity of each worker, that this would ultimately eliminate unemployment.⁴⁷

Merrheim was forced to admit the soundness of Raveté's arguments.⁴⁸ Throughout his career, Merrheim never reacted to capitalism or mechanization in a reactionary manner. He always accepted advances in the work process. He merely wanted to guarantee that workers would benefit from industrial progress and eventually control the economic system. Prodded to look at the positive aspects of Taylorism by Raveté, Merrheim admitted that 'we have arrived at a stage of industrial evolution that necessitates new methods of production and of work. The merit of Taylor is to have understood that it is necessary to adopt these new methods'.⁴⁹ In an interview with André Vielleville, the author of a thesis published on Taylorism in 1914, Merrheim pointed out that initially he had been very hostile to Taylorism. At this time, however, it is 'my opinion that a rational organization of work is absolutely necessary [...].' Taylorism itself was not inherently evil. Only the manner in which it was applied determined its value for workers, he stated.⁵⁰ At that time Merrheim did not believe that French industrialists would introduce Taylorism fairly and with advantages for workers. Consequently he remained critical, but he distinguished between the application of Taylorism and its inherent merits. After World War I, moreover, he embraced Taylorism even more openly

than he did in 1914. As the reader will discover in Chapter 10, Merrheim's open espousal of Taylorism was related to his greater shift towards reformism and his constant emphasis on planning. In 1914 his adoption of Taylorism was more subtle. He concluded that workers had to remain vigilant and to organize themselves more powerfully. This would guarantee that no industrialist would apply Taylorism unfairly.⁵¹

Merrheim's conclusions on Taylorism returned to the themes he was emphasizing at that time. His central concern was that workers obtain a theoretical and practical knowledge of the operations of the capitalist-industrial economy. This would provide them with the necessary tools to run the factories themselves.⁵² But education in general also taught the workers about the 'sublime' and 'immense results' of their labor.⁵³ Laborers, educated through their own efforts, one day would seize the instruments of production and liberate themselves from those forces that swallow up 'the most noble and the most indispensable effort of mankind: work [...]'.⁵⁴

Here we come to Merrheim's most original contribution to revolutionary syndicalism, namely his belief that the best organizational model for the workers' movement was the *Comité des Forges*. It appeared sensible to him that workers should 'organize, should follow step by step, in the economic sphere, the action of their masters, and rival them with their own initiative and action'.⁵⁵ He believed this was an absolutely necessary prerequisite for any successful strike or revolution against the capitalist world. Consequently, throughout his life he advised workers to prepare themselves thoroughly, through education and union building, to match the power of the employers so they could eventually succeed in a social revolution. Ironically, however, the effect on Merrheim of his own studies and union building was that he came to emphasize the preparations for the revolution rather than the revolution itself; always measuring the power of the capitalists, he never believed that the working class was ready to challenge them.

CHAPTER 7

MERRHEIM, THE CGT, AND ANTIMILITARISM

During the years before August 1914, Merrheim and the CGT experienced considerable tensions because of the events that eventually led to World War I. As the possibility of a general European war became more probable, syndicalists made clear their resolve not to fight the workers of other nations in defense of middle-class interests. As the CGT began to firm up its posture toward militarism and war, Merrheim emerged as a leading antimilitarist theoretician. In fact, in the half dozen years before the war, several of his proposals established the CGT's official attitude toward militarism. That can best be summed up by the proposition that workers would stage a general strike in response to any declaration of war by the European powers. The common impression was that Merrheim and the revolutionary syndicalist workers would sabotage the French war effort while simultaneously initiating a revolution. Yet when the war broke out, neither Merrheim nor the CGT took any action to protest it. Rather, many syndicalist leaders joined a government of 'national defense' against the German invasion, while the workers flocked to the colors.

The collapse of an antimilitarist doctrine seemed sudden and explicable only by reference to the stronger feelings of nationalism that must have been imbedded in the workers' consciousness. Merrheim invoked this explanation when he argued after the war that had the CGT's directors called a general strike, the government would not have had to call the police to oppose it because the workers would have shot their own leaders.¹ This estimation may not have been far from the mark. In recent years, however, several studies have appeared disclosing how very complex was the left's position on militarism before the war.² This complexity must be taken into account for a full understanding of Merrheim's behavior and attitude. Concerning the revolutionary syndicalists, Jacques Julliard has already shown that a strong antimilitarist stand contained many contradictions and subtle hesitations and was never unanimously endorsed in the confederation.³ There was also no consensus among the rank-and-file. Julliard distinguishes among three general periods in the CGT's antimilitarism: the 'corporate' phase from 1900 to 1906 when antimilitarism was a mild doctrine, limited to teaching the workers that the army broke up strikes and

inculcated patriotic and antileft propaganda among recruits; the phase from 1906 to 1909, when antimilitarism, because of the influence of anarchists, became more 'total' and linked revolution to the fight against the army; finally, the phase after 1909, when the CGT returned to the corporate or more trade union definition of antimilitarism.

In focusing attention on Merrheim within this framework, several significant facts emerge. Of all the CGT's directors, he was the most instrumental in making the corporate definition of antimilitarism prevail. After 1909, in fact, it was Merrheim who led those forces favoring a limited rather than revolutionary view. Not surprisingly, he brought to his antimilitarist resolutions his caution, his tendency to consider all points of view, his desire to prepare for events carefully, his trade union concerns, his hesitations and contradictions. Moreover, the height of the antimilitarist concerns came at the most intense period of the syndicalist crisis, 1909 to 1913, the time when he was actively curtailing the syndicalist left. Antimilitarism for him was another doctrine and practice that had to be tempered and made to fit into a practical trade unionism. Since Merrheim achieved this aim, his career before 1914 not only dramatizes the intricacies of antimilitarism in France, it reveals that, as far as the leadership of the CGT was concerned, the will to challenge the state over militarism was exhausted long before the war.

The Antimilitarist Doctrine

In September 1900, the CGT, meeting in Paris, established an antimilitarist institution known as the *Sou du Soldat*, the Soldier's Penny. The model for the *Sou du Soldat* was taken from the Catholic church. The church, wanting to remain in touch with its faithful who were in the army, invited soldiers to spend their leisure hours at 'catholic circles'. There they would find paper and stamps for writing and sending letters, small sums of money, and spiritual comfort. The CGT, too, decided not to lose touch with its members who were drafted into the army. It, therefore, invited its members to contribute a small sum of money for a fund, *the Sou du Soldat*. This fund became 'the material base of this effort for solidarity'. The various bourses du travail would be the intermediaries between the soldiers and the CGT.⁴

Merrheim wanted to involve his own federation in this endeavor. Like so many revolutionary syndicalists, he resented the army because it attempted to inculcate patriotism in working-class children, forced workers to defend the liberal capitalist state, and frequently broke up strikes as well.

Consequently, he had suggested in 1901 that copperworkers initiate a program to keep alive the class consciousness of drafted workers.⁵ A year later he demanded that the government permit drafted workers to attend meetings of the Bourse du Travail; they should be allowed to continue with their antimilitarist education since the government permitted soldiers to attend gatherings of 'the Catholic Circles'.⁶ On one occasion he concluded that the flag was a 'stupidity in whose name one commits every crime and which is capable of turning a patriot into a parricide'.⁷ Throughout his career he cynically questioned the sacrifices the government and capitalist leaders asked of the working class during wartime. The French government, after all, sold mining concessions to foreign groups and the capitalists were always conducting business with so-called national enemies. Both were hypocrites when speaking to the workers of patriotism.⁸

Earlier than most syndicalists, Merrheim saw very clearly that war was brewing among the European powers. He then led a campaign to alert the workers to this danger.⁹ In 1909 and 1911, he studied the arms race and military budgets and predicted that England and Germany, because of their intense economic competition, would eventually fight each other, thereby dragging the other nations into a general war.¹⁰ 'We find ourselves on the eve of a gigantic European conflict. Nations are marching with great steps; they are preparing themselves feverishly'.¹¹ For the workers the choice was simple: 'Rather insurrection than war! Rather the general strike as a reply to a decree of mobilization'.¹²

Merrheim's reaction to militarism was emotional as well as ideological. The human tragedy involved in war disturbed him greatly. In trying to gather labor support for an antiwar demonstration in December 1912, he indicated how significantly the European scene had changed since 1870 and what this meant for any future war. Henceforth, war between only two nations was impossible: the European world was divided into two hostile military and diplomatic camps. Consider, Merrheim advised the revolutionary syndicalists, the resources, especially in manpower, available to the adversaries. A war in the modern world, he believed correctly, would be total and the destruction it produced horrendous.¹³ Workers responded to his warnings with antiwar rallies. For instance, in December 1912, the Union des Syndicats de la Seine met to discuss his ideas and approximately 1,000 workers attended.¹⁴ The government, too, took careful notice of this meeting as it did of the antimilitarist campaign Merrheim was organizing at the many union meetings he attended.¹⁵

Merrheim also co-sponsored the CGT's definitive statement on war, which was passed by the Congress of Marseille in 1908: 'Workers will res-

pond to a declaration of war with a declaration of the revolutionary general strike'.¹⁶ At the CGT's Congress of Le Havre, it was Merrheim, acting as a spokesman for most of the delegates, who proposed the resolution protesting the Millerand-Berry law. This law would send to an African battalion draftees who had been given a jail sentence. Any member of the CGT arrested for antimilitarist activities or propaganda could be included. At Le Havre Merrheim also recommended two more motions, which the congress passed overwhelmingly. The first stated that the CGT reaffirm its past antimilitarist resolutions and direct the confederation's local institutions to disseminate these decisions. The second invited each federation to establish a *Sou du Soldat*.¹⁷ In November 1912 the CGT held an 'extraordinary conference' to discuss the Balkan flare-up. Merrheim headed the subcommission charged to write an antiwar statement. The conference sanctioned his motion, which declared that the confederation would take advantage of any social crisis to spark 'a revolutionary action'; the motion also directed revolutionary syndicalists not to respond to a government call should war break out; instead, they should leave their place of work, proceed to their unions, and there 'take all measures dictated by circumstances and place with a single objective [...] the revolutionary general strike'.¹⁸ In 1913 Merrheim vigorously supported the confederation's proclamation 'that it is the duty of all conscious wage-earners to fight with all their might the spreading of the militarist spirit [...]'.¹⁹ And in July 1914 he was all set to attend the CGT's next congress, which would debate, among other issues, 'antimilitarism, the *Sou du Soldat*, and opposition to the three year law'.²⁰

Hesitations and the Collapse of Antimilitarism

An uncompromising antimilitarism and an apparent commitment to the general strike to prevent war constituted Merrheim's public posture. However, probing beneath the surface of his statements, while also examining his concrete actions, reveals a different portrait. Throughout his life, he harbored reservations concerning the possibility of an antimilitary action. He always favored a limited, trade union definition of the fight against the army, as did many other syndicalists, a position that carried considerable weight in the CGT. Finally, in the years just before the war, he increasingly became more negative regarding the capacity of the workers to stage a general strike, and many in the CGT were convinced he was correct.

His complex attitude toward antimilitarism did not emerge only in the few years before the war. In 1905 the journal *Le Mouvement Socialiste* ask-

ed syndicalists to define their attitudes toward such concepts as antimilitarism, the nation, patriotism, and the military general strike, a strike of soldiers in response to a declaration of war.²¹ Merrheim answered that workers have no country because the international nature of capitalism had erased national frontiers. Workers, he wrote, could never be patriotic since they had no stake in their country; the nation belonged to the capitalists. 'Under these circumstances can they be patriotic? Why should they be?' Would there ever be a time for him however, when workers might be patriotic? At this moment in French labor history such a possibility was an idle speculation. Still, his response is interesting because he never ruled out love of country or the defense of the nation under all circumstances.²² In 1905, however, he sounded more like Pierre-Joseph Proudhon when Merrheim wrote for *Le Mouvement Socialiste* that 'the nation for our masters, for the capitalists, means the protection and organization of theft'.²³

Merrheim answered another question in *Le Mouvement Socialiste* by noting that a spirit of internationalism, unfortunately, did not correspond to the French workers' antimilitarist statements. Most workers became antimilitarist simply because they hated barracks life, the loss of their liberty, and the brutality and discipline of the officers. Syndicalists could not plan on an automatic outbreak of a military general strike. Such a strike could not be unilateral, since syndicalists had to first consider the state of international readiness. Not to do so would be suicidal folly.²⁴ Throughout his life, even when he adopted some of the more 'total' antimilitarist rhetoric, Merrheim never contemplated antimilitarism as an end in itself or as a tactic to begin the social revolution. Consequently he always considered the practical difficulties in mounting an effective international action against the war and on those grounds alone doubted it would ever succeed. He was also never fully satisfied with the degree of revolutionary consciousness or militancy in France or elsewhere and this too blunted his faith in antimilitarism.

Other syndicalists who responded to *Le Mouvement Socialiste* shared Merrheim's outlook. Louis Niel, a typographer, wrote that 'In case of war, I do not believe that a general strike is possible today'.²⁵ A miner from Carmaux estimated 'that the general military strike is scarcely possible for the moment, and probably not for a long time yet'.²⁶ Raoul Lenoir, Merrheim's co-secretary, explained that the military general strike was 'the most noble movement by which the working class could prove its pride and conscience'. If war broke out before the workers were sufficiently radicalized and educated, however, then each individual must act 'according to his own conscience'.²⁷

A major factor endangering an effective antimilitarism was that a deep

ideological split existed among revolutionary syndicalist leaders. This, too, was born out by answers given to *Le Mouvement Socialiste*. Victor Grif-fuelhes believed that a worker should never defend the soil or nation that does not belong to him. (Did he mean to imply, though, that if a worker had significant rights in a nation he might legitimately defend his homeland? Such a conclusion does fit the tenor of his answer.) Georges Yvetot was more forceful: 'Workers can be patriotic if they have the temperament of dogs'. Niel, on the other hand, represented another tendency in the CGT, one that believed that a nation's acquired liberties were worth protecting against politically more backward countries.²⁸ What is significant about the 1905 questionnaire is that it illicit attitudes that remained consistent right up to the Great War.

The CGT's Antimilitarist Resolutions

By 1906, two developments helped push syndicalists into adopting a revolutionary antimilitarist resolution. First, Georges Clemenceau became prime minister in October and was actively antilabor; second, the Moroccan crisis of the previous year had sufficiently frightened the syndicalists to cause them to attempt a common antiwar action with German workers. Yet even during the period of 1906 to 1909, as the dangers of war became more pronounced, Merrheim and others like him always tried to keep any antimilitarist pronouncements somewhat limited and always linked to economic and trade union issues. Yvetot took the lead at the 1906 Congress of Amiens in extending the corporate definition of antimilitarism to include revolution. He stated that 'antimilitarism and antipatriotic propaganda must become ever more intense and more audacious'.²⁹ When he rose to present his resolution, however, many delegates tried to shout him down.³⁰ Moderates in the CGT objected to this volatile man and to his vigorous proposal; the anarchists, on the other hand, supported him. The motion passed but only by 484 to 300 votes.³¹ The higher figure, however, did not represent a majority of participants at the Congress, since many delegates abstained from the voting. Jean Latapie, co-secretary of the Federation of Metalworkers, explained that 50 percent of the metallurgical unions had failed to vote because they had preferred another antimilitarist resolution, one proposed by Henri Gautier.³² It was a mild statement calling upon workers merely to adopt 'antimilitarism as a means of propaganda and of economic struggle for the suppression of the wage-earning system'.³³ Merrheim, too, publically supported Gautier's motion.³⁴

Similar disagreement was evident in 1908 at the CGT's Congress of

Marseille. Jean-Louis Thuilier, of the Union des Syndicats de la Seine, proposed that workers should be ready to mount a general strike, and, with the cooperation of 'mobilized reservists and active soldiers', a 'military insurrection' the moment war broke out.³⁵ Another participant suggested that workers turn their guns 'against the exploiters'. He suggested that the time had come to prepare practical measures for the general strike and ended his speech by praising 'crazy' types like Yvetot.³⁶ Niel, on the other hand, believed that patriotism and militarism were essentially political matters, and therefore, should not be discussed by revolutionary syndicalists. A general strike, he stated, can only be called for economic reasons.³⁷ Victor Renard of the Federation of Textile Workers proposed that workers pressure the government to prevent war. He never mentioned the general strike in this context, but only because such an occurrence would disrupt economic life.³⁸ Léon Jouhaux, who headed the CGT from 1909 through World War I, illustrated the problem of revolutionary syndicalists who always considered the trade union and government context before they acted. He would not employ the word 'insurrection' in any resolution, he stated, since state employees who were CGT members would be open to the charge that they engaged in political activity, which the law forbade.³⁹

The resolution that Merrheim offered, and that the congress passed, steered a middle position between these opposing forces. It stated that antimilitarism was an economic issue – and therefore a proper subject for syndicalists to debate – because the state used the army to break strikes and because wars diverted workers away from their true economic interests. Consequently 'The congress declares that it is necessary, from the international point of view, to educate the workers so that in case of war between the powers, the workers shall respond to a declaration of war with a declaration of the revolutionary general strike'.⁴⁰ Thus the CGT's most famous statement on war was really a compromise, and although 670 delegates approved it, 406 voted against it.⁴¹ Even more serious was the false impression it created. After this vote syndicalists tended to quote only the last part of the declaration to indicate their attitude on war. Yet, as Julliard points out, the resolution did not commit the CGT to an automatic and unconditional general strike call, but rather to the need of educating the workers for a general strike to prevent war.⁴²

Weakness of Internationalism

By 1908, too, Merrheim and the CGT leadership had a very negative estimation of the international workers' movement. This only further

weakened their antimilitarist resolve when war broke out. The major international workers' associations were linked to socialist political parties. They and the CGT, which eschewed formal political parties, remained at odds over this issue. Delegates at the Congress of Marseille expressed varying degrees of disappointment with the Syndicalist International.⁴³ Merrheim summed up their feelings when he criticized the German trade unionists for always insisting that the CGT join with the Socialist party.⁴⁴

Some diplomatic crises appeared so serious, however, that the CGT and international socialists did manage common demonstrations. But even then enormous difficulties emerged. During the 1911 Balkan crisis, for instance, the Germans at first invited only the French left to Berlin to study the emergency. Merrheim believed that the exclusion of the English left was shortsighted – he reiterated his view that England and Germany were the main international enemies – and that a forceful demonstration rather than a study trip was necessary under existing circumstances.⁴⁵ The Federation of Metalworkers backed its secretary and voted to boycott the Berlin meeting.⁴⁶ Matters changed only when this crisis became intense and, indeed, demonstrations did take place in August. Even then, however, a subtle weakness concerning a common antiwar tactic appeared. The French syndicalists had always been willing to talk about the general strike as a possible device to prevent war. At the Salle Wagram, where workers' delegations from Germany, Spain, England, the Netherlands, and France met in August, Albert Bourderon of the French Federation of Barrel Makers proposed the following resolution, which the conference passed: 'the delegates of the workers' organizations [...] declare themselves ready to oppose any declaration of war with all the means in their power'.⁴⁷ Absent conspicuously from this statement was any mention of the general strike or of any specific tactic. This was because the German workers always insisted at international meetings that each national workers' association fight militarism with means appropriate to its specific national setting. No national group should impose its favorite tactics upon another national party.

Final Breakdown

Between 1912 and 1913, the CGT's will for a decisive antimilitarist action fell apart completely. In fact, by 1913, antimilitarism had become the source of bitter acrimony between Merrheim and several other syndicalist leaders. This coincided with the period in which Merrheim emphasized the corporate definition of antimilitarism more strongly than ever. Largely

because of his influence the CGT dropped the revolutionary view of antimilitarism. The 1912 Congress of Le Havre, for example, passed his resolution on militarism.⁴⁸ Other delegates there, however, had suggested bolder action. Raymond Péricat recommended that the congress hint, without saying so outright, that soldiers desert rather than fight.⁴⁹ The CGT did not adopt this suggestion, but after the congress Merrheim went to great lengths to formally disassociate himself and the CGT from the advice that workers desert.⁵⁰ The *Sou du Soldat*, he stated emphatically, would inculcate class and revolutionary consciousness in workers but '*we are against desertion*'.⁵¹ He did not wish the government to discipline the CGT for suggesting something so specific and so illegal and, more importantly, from the classic revolutionary syndicalist viewpoint, so insurrectionalist as desertion. Merrheim's alternative, the *Sou du Soldat*, was not however, as a delegate at Le Havre pointed out, obligatory for the federations and, therefore, was a relatively safe and mild suggestion.⁵²

During the month following the Congress of Le Havre, another Balkan crisis broke out and on this occasion Merrheim and the CGT pulled back one more step from a daring antimilitarist stand. The French syndicalists met in November 1912 at an 'extraordinary conference' to discuss the Balkan wars and they expressed serious doubts concerning the CGT's ability to stage a unified national protest much less to coordinate international efforts.⁵³

Before the conference had met they had already encountered serious difficulties in trying to arrange workers' demonstrations against the conflict for Paris, London, and Vienna.⁵⁴ The Austrian and German syndicalists again insisted that the French cooperate with the Socialist party in the rallies, something the CGT would not do. The November conference, therefore, decided that the CGT would hold its own antiwar demonstration in December. And it passed Merrheim's motion simply advising workers to do all in their power to bring about the 'revolutionary general strike'.⁵⁵

Events of 1913 make it apparent that Merrheim and the CGT's directors had abandoned completely the possibility of leading the workers in a general strike against war. During this year the government debated the military bill extending the draft to three years. On May 27, the confederation's Confederal Committee met to map out a protest strategy.⁵⁶ Jouhaux warned that the government might arrest CGT activists for their antimilitarist campaign. Nevertheless, he wanted the confederation to prepare a manifesto outlining its demands and plans to public officials. Another syndicalist at the meeting, Arthur Marchand of the Federation of Barrel Makers, demanded a general strike to protest the military bill. Merrheim advised extreme caution: the manifesto should contain nothing to provide

the government with an excuse to attack the confederation. Péricat countered by noting that the CGT's antimilitarist campaign was having an effect and should continue in a forceful manner. The decree the CGT eventually issued was the reserved statement Merrheim preferred.⁵⁷ It denounced the government's attempts to link recent disturbances in the army with the CGT's antimilitarist campaign. Such agitation, it stated, was a spontaneous reaction to the three-year military bill. The heart of the manifesto was a general appeal to parents and soldiers to fight the military bill.

The CGT also staged rallies against the government's proposed law, but these too had significant limits. Considering that the militarist fervor was especially high, the CGT began to cooperate with the socialists. On March 1, it demonstrated together with German socialists, and on March 16, it joined hands with French socialists at a meeting of 200,000 workers. The confederation's 1913 May Day gatherings were also especially vocal. Furthermore, the CGT planned another mass demonstration for July 13. In the first week of July, however, the government arrested several syndicalist leaders, blaming them for some recent military mutinies. Among those it incarcerated were Georges Yvetot and Charles Marck, the treasurer of the CGT. The police also visited the homes of Jouhaux and Merrheim but left these two men free.⁵⁸ Assembling against the background of these detentions, the Confederal Committee tempered its plans for the July rally. Jouhaux wanted the protest to go on, but thought that 'we must not provide an occasion for some new blood-letting within our ranks by passing far-fetched decisions'.⁵⁹ Another syndicalist, however, proposed a large outdoor meeting for July 14, a purposefully provocative action, given the date's national significance. Péricat went further and suggested a twenty four hour strike for July 14. Jules Bled, on the other hand, warned against doing battle with the government and stated that the cause of those arrested would not be advanced if the government rounded up more syndicalists. Bourderon also counseled against any vigorous action. Merrheim, too, spoke out, asking everyone to think carefully about the safety of the syndicalist movement and to safeguard its future. This view prevailed and the Confederal Committee decided to stage a demonstration (rather than a strike) for July 13 (not July 14). After the meeting, Merrheim, speaking before a metalworkers' local, defended this decision and stated that 'If the CGT had wished to organize a large-scale movement, the government would have immediately jailed the activists'.⁶⁰

A similar negative attitude prevailed at the CGT's special conference of 1913. This meeting was held in July to discuss war. It passed Jouhaux's moderate resolution, which merely stated that 'it is the duty of all conscious wage-earners to fight with all their fervor the extension of the

militarist spirit [...]'.⁶¹ The resolution proposed nothing specific, however, as other syndicalists had hoped it would. Merrheim, both at this meeting, and in his own campaign, was Jouhaux's major supporter on this issue. He rejected revolutionary antimilitarism and defined the fight against the army and war as a daily struggle in which workers learn that soldiers intervene in strikes.⁶² During 1913, Merrheim and other major leaders of the CGT were really indicating that they were not prepared for a general strike to protest the outbreak of any war. It is ironic to recall, therefore, that during July 1914 the CGT announced that its next Congress, which was scheduled to meet in August in Grenoble, would debate 'antimilitarism, the Sou du Soldat, [and] opposition to the three-year law', since World War I broke out first and the CGT had to cancel this meeting.⁶³

PART III
THE WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

CHAPTER 8

THE LIMITS OF ANTIMILITARISM

The outbreak of World War I made it clear that Alphonse Merrheim, even if he did not have the will to attempt a general strike to prevent war, was at least sincerely committed to peace and antimilitarism. As the most important leaders of the CGT, including Léon Jouhaux, cooperated with a government of national defense against the German invasion, Merrheim led an antiwar movement within the confederation. As a result, he appeared to his contemporaries as a bold figure, a committed revolutionary; his active antiwar campaign pitted him against the sentiments of an embattled and occupied France. Almost single-handedly, he issued an antiwar journal, *L'Union des Métaux*, organized antiwar meetings, participated in the formation of antiwar committees, secretly attended an international peace conference, and openly criticized the French war aims. He even chided his government for bad military planning and praised the Germans for bringing industrial efficiency to conquered territories. So unpopular was his antiwar stance that he walked the streets with two large dogs for protection; he constantly changed his residence, frequently used pseudonyms, and always lived in fear of arrest. In fact, he was followed by the police and had his mail opened by the government.

The period of World War I and its aftermath was also the great dividing line for Merrheim and the revolutionary syndicalists. The genuine revolutionaries began to distinguish themselves not only from the admitted reformers but also from those who had unconsciously ceased being revolutionaries. Of the latter, Merrheim was the most important because of his central role in the antiwar movement. What became increasingly obvious about Merrheim as the war progressed was that he never envisaged moving beyond an antiwar position to revolution. He settled upon a very specific nonrevolutionary program relatively early and canonized it at the Conference of Zimmerwald (September 1915). Even when circumstances around him changed drastically, as they did in 1917 when the Bolshevik Revolution broke out, and in 1919 when his own rank-and-file staged menacing wildcat strikes, Merrheim remained wedded to a reformist peace platform and postwar program.

The Majority and the Minority in the CGT

The final week before the outbreak of World War I represented a microcosm of the CGT's contradictions and hesitations concerning antimilitarism; the week ended with a complete reversal of the confederation's stated aims. On July 26, 1914, *La Bataille Syndicaliste* stated that 'The declaration of war must be, for every worker, the order for an immediate cessation of work. To any declaration of war, the worker must, without any delay, respond with a revolutionary general strike'. Jouhaux also called upon the workers of the world to stage a general strike to ensure peace.¹ On July 27, *La Bataille Syndicaliste* asked French workers to rally and demonstrate in the streets.² That evening workers gathered and clashed with police. On July 28, the syndicalist leaders Léon Jouhaux, Georges Dumoulin, Georges Yvetot, and Alphonse Merrheim held antiwar meetings at the Salle Wagram. On the same day the CGT's Confederal Committee stated that 'In the current situation, the CGT reminds everyone that it is absolutely opposed to any war. War is not the solution to any problem. It is and remains the most frightening of human calamities. Down with war! Long live peace!'³

At this time the CGT was in contact with the Socialist party. Jouhaux, on his own initiative, had opened talks with the socialists in the last days of July to protest the impending war. In addition, Merrheim, along with Jouhaux, Dumoulin, Jules Bled, and Arthur Minot, met with the Socialists Jean Jaurès, Edouard Vaillant, Hyacinthe Dubreuil, and Pierre Renaudel. These men planned a workers' demonstration for August 2, to protest the Russian order of mobilization. Jaurès advised the CGT to guard against panic in the ranks of the workers and also expressed the belief that the crisis would pass in about two weeks. Jouhaux reported this conversation to the Confederal Committee, and it suggested more frequent contact between the Socialist party and the CGT. The committee then chose Merrheim and a delegation to carry on the talks.⁴

Just at this very moment, however, the CGT began to retreat. One syndicalist suggested to the Confederal Committee on July 28 that audacious antiwar action be taken immediately. Raoul Lenoir and Léon Jouhaux, however, opposed this advice.⁵ Then on July 31, Jaurès, chief oracle of the Socialist party and a committed antiwar proponent, was assassinated by a right wing nationalist. The CGT's Confederal Committee, confused and panicked by the news of the murder, agreed 'that now was not the moment for any incendiary declarations [...]. It is necessary to shelve the antimilitarist declarations of the national congresses of the confederation [...]'.⁶ Merrheim voted for this position. Moreover, immediately after the

assassination of Jaurès, Merrheim had stated that no one could reproach the CGT for failing to call for an insurrection: that kind of action had to come from the workers themselves, and they lacked the will for such a move. 'Nothing is yet lost', he concluded naively.⁷ By August 3, *La Bataille Syndicaliste* concluded that 'against the right of the fist, against German militarism, it is necessary to save the democratic and revolutionary tradition of France'.⁸ Finally, on August 5, Jouhaux, speaking at Jaurès's funeral, said that 'I declare that it is not for hate of the German people that we shall drive onto the fields of battle; rather it is for the hate of German imperialism'.⁹

Fear had played a role in this dramatic shift. The government maintained a list, the Carnet B, of some 3,000 syndicalists it would round up in case of war. A police report written on July 29 stated that because they feared arrest, the CGT's 'most important leaders – Jouhaux, Merrheim, Lenoir, Marck – were already unnerved'. They knew that the police prefect was verifying their addresses at the time, and they found the thought of prison painful and that of 'concentration camps' frightening.¹⁰ Syndicalist leaders were aware, too, that Adolphe Messimy, the minister of war, wanted them arrested immediately and had stated to the Council of Ministers, 'Give me the guillotine and I shall guarantee you victory'.¹¹ Thus, to prevent any harmful antisindicalist campaign, the CGT's directors established contact with the government.¹² Jouhaux was in touch with Raymond Poincaré, president of the republic.¹³ The former reported to his Confederal Committee that Louis Malvy, the minister of the interior, was resisting Messimy's counsels.¹⁴ Indeed, on July 31, Malvy wired his prefects that the conduct of the revolutionary syndicalists at that moment warranted their continued freedom.¹⁵ The CGT had obviously indicated to the government in some fashion that it was not prepared to sabotage the French war effort.

More than fear was involved, however. Patriotism, too, accounts for the CGT's actions during August 1914. On August 4, Jouhaux, with Bled, secretary of the Union Départementale de la Seine, joined a Comité de Secours National along side representatives of industry. On August 4, the socialist group in the Chamber of Deputies unanimously voted for war credits. At the end of the first week of August, Jouhaux exhorted French workers to destroy German militarism. On August 28, the Socialists Jules Guesde and Marcel Sembat, along with Jouhaux, entered the Union Nationale presided over by René Viviani. Jouhaux took on the title 'delegate of the nation', a voluntary and honorific post in which he would communicate the government's position to the workers. When German troops threatened Paris, Jouhaux announced on September 3, that he would leave with the government to go to Bordeaux. Other important syndicalists –

Victor Griffuelhes, Victor Lefèvre, Clément Vignaud, Jules Bled – also went to Bordeaux. The basic position of these men was that Germany had started the war and that the French syndicalists had a legitimate right to protect republican liberties against German aggression and militarism. Also, they would not define any peace objectives until the Allies had defeated Germany. A police reporter noted perceptively that for the CGT ‘the French cause has become the cause of humanity. It is necessary to be patriotic to save the Republic and universal liberty’. The syndicalists, he concluded, not only wanted to safeguard their acquired liberties but also to transform the German monarchy into a republic.¹⁶

By the end of October, however, another group of syndicalists began to gather at the offices of Pierre Monatte’s syndicalist weekly, *La Vie Ouvrière*. They wished to begin an antiwar campaign. In the original gathering were Henri Guilbeaux, Marcel Martinet, Amédée Dunois, Daniel Renoult, and Julius Martov, the Russian socialist. Alphonse Merrheim, Albert Bourderon, and Leon Trotsky soon joined. A public signal of sorts was sounded the month before when Romain Rolland, the novelist, writing from Switzerland, openly attacked the war, calling it an ‘octopus that is sucking the best blood of Europe’.¹⁷ His protest encouraged the small band of French protesters.

The Limits of Antimilitarism

During the first years of the war, Merrheim set the tone and direction in the CGT of the antiwar movement.¹⁸ His earliest statements on the war established the parameters within which he operated and determined the kinds of actions he took throughout this period. During December 1914 he wrote two articles defending Karl Liebknecht’s position on the war. The latter had voted on December 2, 1914, against Germany’s war credits. Explaining his motives to a Swiss journal, *Berner Tagwacht*, Liebknecht stated that the war was an imperialist struggle, an attempt by nations to establish world industrial and financial dominance. He called for ‘a quick peace [...] which does not humiliate anyone, a peace without conquests [...]’. He stated, too, that ‘Only a peace based upon the international solidarity of the working class and on the liberty of all peoples can be a durable peace’.¹⁹ Merrheim was also thinking in these terms. Two months earlier, in October, he had said privately that the moment to assess any blame for the war had not arrived since each day thousands were being killed.²⁰ Thus inspired by Liebknecht’s position, Merrheim published some suggestions for peace. He expressed his ‘profound conviction’ that ‘this

war shall not destroy nor suppress capitalism [...]'. His main point was that it should end immediately. 'It would be an everlasting honor for the CGT to have neatly and loudly sided with Karl Liebknecht'.²¹

Between this time and the early fall of 1915, Merrheim added considerable precision to his peace aims. These are the subject of the rest of this chapter.

One of Merrheim's first objectives was to establish greater visibility for his antiwar endeavors. This would make them more effective while simultaneously encouraging peace efforts in Germany under Liebknecht. Consequently, on April 17, 1915, Merrheim's federation adopted a resolution that sympathized with the antiwar campaign in Germany under Karl Liebknecht, Clara Zetkin, and Rosa Luxemburg, that expressed the hope that the campaign would become better known, and that the CGT would undertake parallel antiwar measures. (The CGT refused this request.) The resolution also contained statements that the censor had cut out: these called for a peace without annexations, the economic and political freedom of all nations, general disarmament, and the obligatory arbitration of international disputes.²²

To fully express himself, however, Merrheim needed something more dramatic than an excised resolution. He announced to his federation that he would prepare a special antiwar issue of *L'Union des Métaux* for May Day 1915.²³ Then he informed the CGT that he would lead his federation in antiwar demonstrations on May 1. He would not permit that May Day to pass without a protest because of the many letters he had received from soldiers complaining about the CGT's failure to demonstrate against the war. He announced, too, that he was preparing antiwar meetings for Lyon, Nantes, and Saint Nazaire.²⁴ Jouhaux responded that the moment was inopportune for any agitation, and he defended his position in his own special May Day issue of *La Voix du Peuple*.²⁵

Working secretly with his friend Alfred Rosmer, Merrheim went ahead with his journal. Together the two wrote the articles, arranged the printing, did the proofreading, and planned the distribution of 15,000 copies of the paper. Merrheim also wrote the lead article, 'Notre Attitude. Notre Pensée'. In it he attacked the French insistence on an Allied victory as a prerequisite for peace. He denounced the syndicalists who cooperated with the government and insisted that his federation would remain independent and thereby be able to influence a just peace. Merrheim's main point was that 'This is enough! We do not wish that this May 1 pass by without our voice being heard. [...] This war is not our war!'. To end the war, he proposed not 'a militarist peace with forced annexations, nor a peace with imperialist conquests, but a peace guaranteeing the following principles: *no*

*annexations, the political and economic independence of each nation, disarmament, and the obligatory arbitration [of international disputes].*²⁶

The government and even his friends criticized Merrheim when the journal appeared. A rumor circulated that the government would arrest him.²⁷ Albert Thomas, undersecretary of state for munitions and Merrheim's friend, warned him to be prudent since government ministers were talking about him. Merrheim retorted that he hoped his actions would spark a German antiwar movement. He would continue his peace efforts and not wait for a 'convenient' moment to protest since too many workers were dying. 'I am – and remain more decided than ever – for the continuation and intensification of an action in favor of peace [...].'²⁸ Indeed, he went ahead with his antiwar meetings in Lyon and Saint Nazaire.²⁹

Merrheim's supporters applauded his efforts. Rosmer remarked years later that *L'Union des Métaux* was the first ray of sunshine since the bleak days of August 1914.³⁰ Rolland wrote to Merrheim that 'The issue you have sent me of L'U[nion] des M[étaux] has given me enormous pleasure. One had forgotten this sound of free men resolved to defend their liberty'.³¹ Moreover, following the publication of the journal, two federations, those of the leather and hide workers and the hat makers, and five departmental unions declared themselves in accord with the Federation of Metalworkers. The Federation of Hat Makers even issued a special antiwar issue of its own newspaper, *L'Ouvrier Chapelier*.³²

The Conference of Zimmerwald

A small antiwar campaign was mounting within the CGT. The next step for Merrheim was to link it with similar international efforts. Happily, soundings had already begun on that front. Socialists from neutral nations – notably Italians and Swiss – were visiting European capitals at the beginning of 1915 trying to persuade the Second International to call an antiwar meeting. After all, the socialist International had stated at its 1907 Congress of Stuttgart that Socialists should do all in their power to prevent war and failing that they should try to hasten the end of capitalist rule.³³ It reiterated this belief in 1910 and 1912. But when the war did break out, the Second International suspended its congresses and many of its members joined in the defense of their respective homelands. Too many European Socialists had long ceased being revolutionary; the Second International, in any case, had no machinery to enforce an antimilitary resolution. Moreover, since the war had broken out in an era when most socialists believed that such an event was impossible – the antiwar forces being so

strong within capitalist society – the war caught the socialists quite off guard when it began.³⁴ By the end of 1914, however, a handful of sincerely committed internationalists no longer wished to remain passive while thousands were dying for the defense of the capitalist state. In the forefront were the Italian and Swiss Socialists. However, their efforts to prod the International to meet officially had failed. On the other hand, they did interest a small number of socialists and syndicalists in holding an unofficial gathering of those within the European left who would not identify with any government's war aims and who wished instead to undertake an international campaign for peace within the ranks of the Second International. Their conference, which met in Zimmerwald from September 5 to 8, 1915, was preceded by meetings of socialist women and socialist youth in Berne in March and April 1915, respectively.

Merrheim, then the most outspoken revolutionary syndicalist antiwar activist, was to represent the French syndicalist left at Zimmerwald. Speaking for the French Socialists was Albert Bourderon of the Federation of Barrel Makers. Merrheim reported to his federation that he was going to Switzerland because 'the official organizations' did not wish to start a peace initiative or make contact with German antiwar leaders. The minority would undertake this task, he said.³⁵ The two men set off by train on September 3, heading for what they believed to be a secret meeting in Berne. In fact, the French government and police knew all about their intentions and movements. The prime minister, Viviani, asked Albert Thomas to dissuade his friend Merrheim from the trip. This voyage, Viviani indicated, could constitute a crime against the state. Thomas did not succeed and the government issued Merrheim a passport, fearing, as one writer has noted, that not to do so would only have reinforced the antiwar movement. Also, the government, knowing the latter's limited aims, preferred to give him a slightly free reign. The police watched him carefully, however.³⁶

On the eve of the voyage, the police knew which one of two possible trains Merrheim and Bourderon would take to Switzerland, and the name of the Zürich doctor (M. Brupbacher) who had invited them to Berne. This invitation, the police suspected, was a cover for the trip. The real purpose of the visit, the police surmised, was so Merrheim and Bourderon could contact German peace advocates and coordinate their antiwar activities.³⁷

The police also searched and questioned the two men when they returned to France. The authorities reported that they found little on them except for a pamphlet entitled 'Les Socialistes et la guerre'. They believed the pamphlet to be unimportant and found it strange that neither man had any information with him concerning the conference. Merrheim reported to his

federation that he had left his notes in Berne for fear of being searched at the border. He stated, too, that the conference had moved secretly to Zimmerwald in order to avoid the police and newspapermen gathered in Berne.³⁸

At the conference Merrheim reiterated his antiwar principles. Officially, the Zimmerwald conference had met to reestablish international relations among socialists, especially those of belligerent nations, and to begin an international antiwar action. However, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, one of the delegates, wanted more, as he made quite clear to Merrheim before the conference began. No sooner had Merrheim arrived in Switzerland than Russian socialists whisked him away from the train station to meet Lenin at the *Maison du Peuple* in Berne. There, for eight hours, Lenin argued essentially two theses: (1) the Conference of Zimmerwald should break with the Second International and establish a new, revolutionary Third International; and (2) the conference should call for an immediate general strike of the masses and soldiers against the war. At the conference Lenin sought to guide discussions by submitting a draft manifesto and a draft resolution containing his views.³⁹

In the private meeting, Merrheim told Lenin that he was at Zimmerwald not to start a new International but simply to utter 'the cry of my tortured conscience to the workers of all countries, so that they may direct themselves in common action against the war'.⁴⁰ During the debates he supported the majority nonrevolutionary antiwar resolutions that are expressed in the statement, 'We have met together to join anew the broken ties of international relations and to summon the working class to reorganize and begin the struggle for peace'.⁴¹ The tactics of an antiwar movement would be worked out in the individual countries. In addition, in his own specific suggestions for peace, Merrheim emphasized that he would not have peace at any price or unilaterally; Germany would have to evacuate the invaded territories, although it should be reimbursed by England and France; also, England should abandon the German colonies it had captured.⁴² Merrheim had estimated that the European working class was not sufficiently prepared for a revolutionary general strike. Therefore, he did not believe the moment appropriate for any more vigorous action as Lenin had suggested. Lenin, on the other hand, believed that Merrheim was deluding himself. The former admitted that the French workers were demoralized but insisted that socialists should propagandize revolution in a manner appropriate to the circumstances, something that Merrheim refused to consider.⁴³

Basically, the real issue was not whether the European working class was ready for a general strike, but rather that Merrheim was so impressed with

the power of capitalism that his mind recoiled from considering the war as an opportunity for workers to revolt against the state. When he returned to France, therefore, he continued the antiwar campaign along the lines he had already established in *L'Union des Métaux* and at Zimmerwald.

In 1915, however, Merrheim's position was unpopular with the CGT's majority, of concern to the government, and quite brave considering that France was under attack from her ancient enemy. In 1915, also, Lenin's voice for revolution was virtually alone. Only as the war progressed did it become apparent that Merrheim's antiwar stance had limits beyond which he would never go, no matter what the circumstances, and that there were more bold and revolutionary people to his left.

Merrheim and the Antiwar Campaign

From the moment he returned to France from Switzerland, Merrheim organized an antiwar, pro-peace movement on the basis of the Zimmerwald resolutions. The most he would say about Lenin was that the latter spoke 'for the extreme left'. And he noted that the discussions at Zimmerwald were sometimes difficult 'because it was not easy to reconcile the different points of view of the Russians'.⁴⁴ Otherwise, he said very little about the Russians and in his report to his federation never acknowledged their proposals.⁴⁵

From this point on Merrheim threw himself into a movement for peace, and indeed was its major animator in the CGT. In Paris, he organized and spoke to meetings of peace advocates in the CGT unions and the Socialist party, wrote and distributed brochures and pamphlets, and edited the antiwar issues of *L'Union des Métaux*. He also traveled to other parts of France, always talking about Zimmerwald, and establishing local committees that would be linked to his efforts in the capital. The police evaluated his role precisely: 'Since the International Socialist Conference of Zimmerwald, Merrheim has resolutely taken the direction of the peace movement in France'.⁴⁶

At some meetings that Merrheim attended, he expressed his admiration for German efficiency in the conquered territories, which he compared favorably with French ineptness in military planning. He also pointed out that French soldiers committed their share of atrocities and that the German troops frequently behaved very well in France. Such statements led to charges that Merrheim was in the employ of the Germans. After the war he openly admitted that he had received money from the Italian Socialist party and from the Federations of Metalworkers, Hat Makers, and Barrel

Makers to attend the Zimmerwald conference. He denied, however, any connection with the Germans. The pro-German statements were his attempt to counter the wave of anti-German feeling in France in order to facilitate an equitable peace. He was also very impressed with and admired the kind of organizational efficiency the Germans exhibited.⁴⁷

Merrheim also had to defend himself against the accusation after the war that he had been a member of the League of the Rights of Man during the war. The league's primary purpose was to defend any French citizen against all injustice. High on its list of members were intellectuals, jurists and lawyers. Socialists, anarchists, and even numerous syndicalists, especially railway workers, also joined the league.⁴⁸ It was not customary, however, for members of the CGT to be active in the league since this did imply a blurring of class lines. Merrheim did address the league both during and after the war. As he openly explained to his federation, however, he addressed the league, as any other group, on the peace campaign. After the war, he accepted the league's platform to give an anti-Bolshevik speech. No definite proof of his membership exists, however, although one writer claimed to have seen Merrheim's membership card in the league.⁴⁹ The most likely explanation of Merrheim's connection with the league was that it was a temporary contact of convenience.

The Comité d'Action Internationale was the most important working-class antiwar organization with which Merrheim worked. It was also the setting against which the difference between his position and a more radical one to his left emerged most clearly. Along with Péricat and Bourderon, Merrheim had organized this committee on November 21, 1915, to continue in France the work of the Zimmerwald conference. The committee's headquarters was in Berne. Among its early members were Marcel Hasfeld, Louis Bertho, Armand Bidault, Stephanie Bouvard, Salomon Dridzo, Sebastien Faure, Emile Hubert, Léon Jean-Marie Jahane, Isidore Lorient, Joseph Ouin, Antoine Aimé Rey, Louise Saumoneau, Maurice Vandamme, and Leon Trotsky. Raymond Péricat was the secretary.⁵⁰ The final structure and mode of operation for the committee were established at the headquarters of the Federation of Metalworkers. The Comité d'Action would choose a 'collector' from within each section of the Socialist party and each CGT union. The collector's name and address would be known only to the executive leadership of the committee, the Bureau. Each collector was to recruit for membership in the Comité d'Action only those people he knew personally. The collector was responsible also for the monthly dues of 50 centimes from each member and for the distribution of the Comité d'Action's brochures and tracts.⁵¹ The leadership of the Comité d'Action was to meet once a week at the headquarters of the CGT. Its basic goal

was to disseminate and intensify the Zimmerwald peace campaign.⁵² It began this mission by printing and distributing 25,000 copies of the demands for peace that Merrheim had published in *L'Union des Métaux*; 25,000 reprints of the Zimmerwald resolutions; and 15,000 copies of Pierre Monatte's antiwar letter, 'Lettre aux abonnés de *La Vie Ouvrière*'.⁵³ When Jouhaux learned of these activities, he gathered around him a nucleus of loyal followers to oppose Merrheim's activities.⁵⁴

Initially, the Comité d'Action adopted Merrheim's peace platform. Even then, however, some hints of a future split existed. At the second meeting of the Comité d'Action, on November 21, Louis Bertho, speaking for the anarchists, demanded peace 'at any price and without conditions'. Alzir Hella, also an anarchist, attacked Jouhaux and the CGT majority, and advocated a split between the latter and the 'revolutionary party', by which he meant members of the peace movement.⁵⁵ For the moment, however, the Comité d'Action, including the anarchists, remained within the CGT hoping to be able to change its policies.⁵⁶

With time, however, opposition to Merrheim's position began to crystallize and gain ground. It rallied to Lenin's thesis that the war should signal the beginning of revolutionary action in the West. On February 7, 1916, the Comité d'Action Internationale changed its name to the Comité pour la Reprise des Relations Internationales. The latter, in turn, divided into two sections, a socialist one headed by Bourderon and a syndicalist one chaired by Merrheim.⁵⁷ The statement of principle issued by the Comité pour la Reprise, signed by Merrheim and Bourderon, stated that the new organization had no wish to rival the CGT nor create division in the working class. It merely wanted to revive the Second International and start an action in favor of peace.⁵⁸ By April, however, some on the Comité pour la Reprise wanted to move beyond this formula. At one meeting some one proposed to encourage soldiers to revolt. Merrheim and a few others took this man aside and argued against his 'criminal provocations'. Péricat, on the other hand, favored the 'spirit' of this revolutionary proposal.⁵⁹

One of the most outspoken and famous critics of the Zimmerwald peace program in France was the Russian Leon Trotsky. He was supported by Inessa Armand and Salomon Dridzo. It was Trotsky's view that Zimmerwald constituted a 'demi opposition' and was not genuinely revolutionary or internationalist.⁶⁰ He urged the Comité pour la Reprise to reaffirm the class struggle and attack the Socialist majority for violating this Marxist axiom. Merrheim resisted attacking the majority so frontally.⁶¹ At one meeting of the committee Trotsky proposed that the revolutionary class struggle and antiwar movement should ignore national defense complete-

ly.⁶² He noted that his national origin was Russian, but that he had defended international socialism in Germany, Austria, and did so in France; his socialist spirit, he said, was not subject to feelings of nationalism. He concluded by asking the French peace advocates to break with the reformers and join a new, revolutionary Third International.⁶³

Péricat was Trotsky's most prominent adherent on the Comité pour la Reprise. In October 1916, a police spy reported that Péricat had become an 'intransigent internationalist' and was criticizing the Comité pour la Reprise for lack of energy. On one occasion Péricat declared that 'Personally, it doesn't matter to me whether the Germans are in Marseille or in Paris. I don't have a country, and whether I live under the Prussian bolt or the French bolt is all the same to me. I won't give a piece of my skin to save France'.⁶⁴

Such sentiments disturbed Merrheim. First, as the police remarked, he 'did not wish a schism in the CGT'.⁶⁵ Consequently, he continued throughout the war to anchor the peace movement on a Zimmerwaldian platform and also remain within the CGT. Others in the minority, however, were moving further to the left, making it apparent in the process that Merrheim had taken a stand against a genuine social or political revolution. For instance, the international Zimmerwald organization planned a second conference of antiwar socialists and syndicalists. The Comité pour la Reprise debated what position to adopt at this conference.⁶⁶ One syndicalist demanded peace at any price; Péricat urged more vigorous antimilitarist action for May Day; Trotsky believed that workers should stress their internationalism and socialism and that the minority Socialists should oppose the majority more decisively. Merrheim defended the Zimmerwald program and attacked Trotsky's ideas as an 'ivory tower for the working class in the present circumstances of the war'.⁶⁷

This meeting failed to adopt a resolution for the second international conference of the Zimmerwaldians. Moreover, when that conference met, at Kienthal, Switzerland, on April 24, 1916, no one from the Comité pour la Reprise attended. Merrheim and Bourderon were scheduled to go, but the police refused them a passport; in their place went three Socialist deputies with parliamentary immunity.⁶⁸

The Conference of Kienthal, under the influence of Lenin's supporters, passed a more radical statement than the Conference of Zimmerwald. The Kienthal resolution not only condemned the 'social-chauvinists' who faught for national defense, it also criticized the antiwar minority that believed that peace would be achieved by such measures as compulsory arbitration of international disputes, disarmament, and greater democracy in foreign affairs; revolutionary mass action could assure peace, the resolution stated.⁶⁹

After Kienthal someone asked Merrheim why no one from the Comité pour la Reprise had gone to the conference to express the sentiment of the French minority (the parliamentary Socialists spoke only for themselves). At issue was the fact that Merrheim did not inform the committee that the socialist deputies and not he and Bourderon would go to Kienthal. He also neglected to tell the committee the date or the place of the meeting until it was over. He stated that he kept the meeting secret because he feared there might be spies on the Comité pour la Reprise. Albert Delhaye, the man who raised this issue, pointed out that the committee could have passed a resolution without revealing the city or date of the conference.⁷⁰

Merrheim's defense makes some sense – a long debate, resolutions, and the designation of a delegation would have alerted the police to the meeting. But his critics were correct, too, in wondering why he did not make a greater effort to at least inform the Comité pour la Reprise secretly of the details on this meeting. At the time, however, no one on the committee thought that Merrheim was being anything more than extremely cautious. Still, the question may be posed whether Merrheim feared that any one other than himself or Bourderon at Kienthal might have moved beyond the Zimmerwald position. This is not so far-fetched, considering the increased sentiment for Lenin's position on the Comité pour la reprise. In retrospect, Merrheim's precautions do seem exaggerated. Moreover, he never did subscribe to the aims of the Kienthal conference.

In France Trotsky championed the Kienthal resolution, as well as Lenin's general thesis.⁷¹ By the end of 1916, he had made some significant inroads among the peace advocates. On one occasion the Comité pour la Reprise issued a pamphlet with a decidedly revolutionary tone. It was entitled 'Les Socialistes de Zimmerwald et la guerre', and it concluded that 'the proletariat's attitude toward war cannot be determined by the military or strategic situation of the belligerent countries [...]'.⁷² By that time, too, the government had become concerned by Trotsky's presence in France and had him expelled from the country. This, however, did not stop the drift toward a revolutionary stance on the Comité pour la Reprise. The outbreak of the Russian Revolution in February and Lenin's assumption of power in October 1917 only hastened this movement to the left.

Merrheim greeted Lenin's advent to power with a mixture of enthusiasm and reservation. Like most members of the French left, he welcomed the end of Tsarist oppression. On the other hand, he complained privately that French peace advocates had lost a major argument against French participation in the war, namely that their government was allied with reactionary Tsarist Russia. 'This revolution comes two years too late and it means another two years of war', he said. He even shocked his own sup-

porters when he announced his opposition to a separate peace between Germany and Russia. He feared a French defeat if German troops were released from the Russian battle fields.⁷³ Thus, at one meeting of the CGT's Confederal Committee, he supported a Jouhaux resolution that congratulated Russian workers for establishing democracy, but also urged the Russians not to leave the war.⁷⁴

While Merrheim remained firmly entrenched on the side of Zimmerwald, the *Comité pour la Reprise* was moving further to the left. On one occasion it expressed the view that 'The Russian Revolution is the signal for the universal revolution. And the universal revolution shall assure the definitive success of the Russian Revolution. The proper response to the World War must be a World Revolution'.⁷⁵ On the *Comité pour la Reprise* Péricat pressed Merrheim to support a work stoppage for May Day 1917 as a sign of sympathy for the Russian revolutionaries. Merrheim simply did not respond. A police agent noted knowingly that Merrheim was in a precarious position because his own prewar rhetoric and antimilitarist reputation was being used against him.⁷⁶

Merrheim's only response to May 1, 1917, was to have his federation issue a mild resolution 'in favor of the revolutionary people of Russia and Germany [...]'.⁷⁷ The statement never mentioned Lenin or counselled a strike for May Day. This could have been decisive, for as the police noted 'Among the industrial federations only one is capable of going beyond the principal decisions of the CGT and of imparting to these demonstrations a revolutionary allure: the Federation of Metalworkers, but it refused to demonstrate on May 1'.⁷⁸

Throughout the war those to the left of Merrheim believed that he was misguided and hoped that he would eventually join their ranks. It was only after the war that it became apparent that he would never take the revolutionary step. Unknown to this small minority within the peace movement, too, was that throughout the war Merrheim had some very important contacts with the government and a master plan to heal the split within the CGT. These less publicised activities are the subject of chapter 9.

CHAPTER 9

MERRHEIM, JOUHAUX, AND COLLABORATION

While Alphonse Merrheim led the peace forces, he also battled publically with Léon Jouhaux, his good friend and secretary-general of the CGT, because the latter, along with other syndicalist leaders, had joined a government of national defense. The confederation also had suspended its congresses during the war. To Merrheim these actions constituted a striking violation of two cardinal principles of revolutionary syndicalism: political neutrality and antimilitarism. They were all the more reprehensible for their end: the defense of the middle-class state. Merrheim also attacked Jouhaux's identification with Allied war attitudes: that Germany was primarily responsible for the war, that only an Allied victory could ensure a just peace, and that a workers' congress should meet only after the Allied nations had defeated the Central Powers. Merrheim published articles and brochures against Jouhaux, attacked him at union meetings, in committees, and, in general, hounded him to abandon his collaboration. His hostility toward his secretary-general seemed almost irrevocable.

Yet during the war Merrheim, to protect union labor, tacitly assisted in the government's war efforts. Although his contact with the government was no secret – syndicalists knew to whom to turn for an official concession – its full meaning and extent were unknown, and its implications for his future conduct had been grasped neither by contemporaries nor by historians. But this aspect of his wartime activities is in fact central to his political personality because it demonstrates that his concern for the material well-being of his rank-and-file and their institutions ranked above his commitment to social revolution.

Even Merrheim's hostility toward Jouhaux, although real, was also calculated and orchestrated to restore unity to the CGT. Throughout the war Merrheim was constantly exerting the greatest pressure on Jouhaux to have the latter cease his official collaboration with the government. This would permit the joining together of the majority and the minority within the CGT. He was not going to risk those efforts or the displeasure of the government, with which he too was cooperating, by agitating for a more radical antiwar platform or by preparing some antigovernment or revolutionary action that, in any case, he believed would not succeed and would certainly destroy revolutionary syndicalism.

Merrheim and Jouhaux

Merrheim's major target among the syndicalist collaborators was Jouhaux. He resented that Jouhaux had joined the government, thereby breaking with a central revolutionary syndicalist principle and deserting the Parisian working class.¹ 'It is not necessary to emphasize the bad effect of the departure [of Jouhaux and the others] for Bordeaux. We must, on the contrary strive to attenuate these bad impressions among our comrades'. With the Germans advancing on Paris, he insisted that he would remain with the workers 'ready to face all eventualities and ready to take all responsibilities with them'.² To compensate for Jouhaux's departure, Merrheim became interim secretary-general of the CGT. This, he believed, would assist the Parisian workers and ensure the continuity of the traditional revolutionary syndicalist movement. As interim secretary-general, he also hoped to revive the administrative life of the confederation, which had come to a temporary halt when Jouhaux left Paris.³ But he emphasized that he did not want the post permanently and insisted that Jouhaux return to it immediately.⁴ In October Jouhaux did resume his function as secretary-general, although he continued his cooperation with the government. Merrheim's only response was to write to Pierre Monatte that Jouhaux 'continues his monumental gaffes [...]'. Merrheim also told Monatte that he, on the other hand, would 'continue to do my simple duty as a activist with tenacity and energy'.⁵ During these early days of the war, moreover, it was Merrheim who demanded that Jouhaux state for the record that his trip to Bordeaux did not officially implicate the entire CGT in his collaboration. He forced Jouhaux to call a meeting of the Confederal Committee and announce to it that he was going to Bordeaux in a personal capacity only. In principle, therefore, the CGT was still autonomous and by remaining in Paris, Merrheim believed he symbolized the CGT's rejection of Jouhaux's activities.⁶

Merrheim's determination to remain within the CGT and pressure Jouhaux to quit the *union sacrée* frequently placed Merrheim in difficult or compromising situations. The first of these occurred in October 1914, when Scandinavian Socialists invited the CGT to Copenhagen for a proposed international conference of Socialists from neutral and belligerent nations to discuss the war and to prepare for peace. Merrheim did not think the CGT should participate officially because the Germans were occupying neutral Belgium. He did not believe at this time that contact with the German Socialist party was appropriate since it supported its country's war effort.

But it is equally our [the Federation of Metalworkers] opinion that the CGT does not have the right to let this letter [the Scandinavian's invitation] pass without an answer, and the only answer possible is to encourage the neutral nations in their endeavors in favor of peace [...]. The CGT does not have the right to be against peace and [...] it would be a betrayal of all its past not to answer.⁷

The Confederal Committee, however, voted not to answer the Scandinavian's appeal. Pierre Monatte was outraged by this seeming indifference to a long history of antimilitarism and as a consequence he resigned from the Confederal Committee.⁸ Merrheim put aside his pride and merely issued a mild public complaint against the committee's decision.⁹ He also wrote a letter to Jouhaux expressing surprise and regret that the position of the Federation of Metalworkers on the Copenhagen meeting was causing disunity in the CGT. The federation issued a statement, therefore, that it 'believes that it is necessary to declare that it will defend the unity of the confederation as well as the total unity of the International with the same energy that it has defended, since the beginning of the war, the fundamental principles of the CGT'.¹⁰

Another such incident occurred when interallied Socialists held a conference in London on February 14, 1915, to assess their role in the war. A week earlier, the CGT's Confederal Committee debated whether to send representatives. Merrheim argued against participation because he believed the conference would appear as an endorsement of Allied war aims.¹¹ Privately he indicated that 'Those who have refused to go to Copenhagen are not fit to accept the invitation to go to London'.¹² The Confederal Committee decided to attend, however, and picked a delegation that included both Jouhaux and Merrheim. The latter seems a strange choice given his known opposition to the conference. The Confederal Committee obviously knew Merrheim wanted to remain within the CGT and wanted him to defend the minority position inside the CGT rather than to force him outside the confederation.

The prospect of going to London greatly upset Merrheim, and he was hesitant and indecisive about whether to attend the conference.¹³ Not only might it appear that Merrheim had acquiesced to the Allied position, he was also pained at the thought that his actions might hurt any of his antiwar friends.¹⁴ He decided to go, however reluctantly, as he told his federation, to defend the antiwar position; the federation agreed.¹⁵ His sincerity, however, did not eliminate his contradictions, which are explained by his desire to remain within the CGT and to lead an antiwar movement based upon the *status quo ante*.

As Merrheim had anticipated, the Conference of London declared that the Allies were 'inflexibly resolved to fight until victory is achieved [...]'.¹⁶ He defended his peace platform, and then abstained from the final voting

at the conference. Rosmer explained that 'M[errheim], isolated, estimates that he cannot take a position against [the majority]'.¹⁷ Years after this event, Rosmer wrote that the antiwar syndicalists felt themselves 'terribly alone', and this accounted for Merrheim's moderation at the conference.¹⁸ The latter defended himself by noting that the Russian peace advocates at London also abstained from voting and that to protest alone would have had only a nuisance value. 'One shall certainly reproach me for not having voted against [the resolution]. But it was extremely difficult to act otherwise than I did. And I believe that I did well for the future'.¹⁹ He meant by this that boring from within had positive value and offered as proof the fact that he had forced the conferees to state in their resolution that they did not desire 'the political and economic crushing of Germany'.²⁰ He also hoped that London would be 'a first step toward a real international conference to which all nations shall be invited and represented'.²¹

By August 1915 Merrheim's constant pressure against Jouhaux began to show minor but hopeful gains. Signs of a rapprochement between the two men were evident long before they were publically reconciled in 1917. On May 30, 1915, Merrheim and his supporters forced Jouhaux's hand by complaining that the confederation had not met since the war began.²² Jouhaux had to respond and also to define a position. This he did, arguing that peace should be based upon the following principles: (1) the suppression of secret treaties; (2) the respect for the sovereignty of all nations; (3) disarmament; and (4) compulsory arbitration of international disputes. He believed also that the CGT should hold a conference or congress only at the end of the war, at the same time as a diplomatic peace conference; the confederation should not gather while France was under attack from Germany. This, however, was already a concession to Merrheim, since at the beginning of the war Jouhaux flatly refused even to define any peace terms.

At the May 30 meeting of the Confederal Committee, however, Albert Bourderon pressed Jouhaux for a conference: French syndicalists should meet to instruct the secretary-general of their sentiment on the war. The committee agreed and decided to hold a conference on August 15, 1915. A police spy wrote that 'Merrheim had triumphed'.²³ For the first time since the war had begun Jouhaux would have to officially explain his actions since August 1914.

Merrheim wished to air the antiwar stance at the August conference.²⁴ Under no illusion that the majority would suddenly become conciliatory, he hoped that the meeting would be a 'point of departure for a more general movement [against the war]'.²⁵ He condemned collaboration and wanted the CGT to participate immediately in the antiwar movement.

Significantly, however, he never asked for a unilateral French peace or for a definitive peace as long as Germany occupied invaded territories.²⁶ Jouhaux, on the other hand, believed that 'we will examine the resumption of international relations after first examining the faults committed by our enemies, who have done nothing to prevent the war. I do not say 'war until the end' anymore than I say 'immediate peace' [...]; we will make peace when the proper moment comes', by which he meant an Allied victory.²⁷

The conference passed Jouhaux's resolution, which reiterated the peace proposals he had made at the May 30 meeting of the Confederal Committee, and which assumed the necessity of an Allied victory before the settlement of the war.²⁸ Nevertheless, privately Merrheim celebrated a victory. Behind-the-scenes, he had forced Jouhaux to include in his resolution that 'the conference, disapproving all policies of conquest, appeals to the international proletariat for peace [...]'. In addition to this concession, Jouhaux's talk about self-determination, compulsory arbitration for international disputes, secret diplomacy, the arms race, and peace terms was due to Merrheim's pressure, the police reported.²⁹

Developments in 1916 caused Merrheim and Jouhaux to move even closer, although publically they still appeared as enemies. Strikes, which had been few in 1914 and 1915 compared to previous years, began to increase significantly in 1916.³⁰ Unions, especially those in the war industries, began to complain about the rising cost of living. Since so many of these were metalworkers' locals, Merrheim was especially interested in their plight. Moreover, sentiment began growing for a more revolutionary peace program than Merrheim favored. Anarchists from the newspaper *Temps Nouveaux* had formed a dissident group within the French antiwar movement and planned more spirited antiwar measures. Moreover, the Conference of Kienthal, as the reader saw in chapter 8, had met in April 1916 and called for a revolutionary mass action to ensure peace.³¹ On top of all this, President Woodrow Wilson of the United States asked all belligerents to define their peace terms.

Jouhaux remained wedded to his position and still commanded a majority within the CGT. In May 1916 a congress of the Union des Syndicats de la Seine supported the secretary-general's war-time policy by forty-eight votes to twenty-four.³² Jouhaux defended his record in a widely circulated brochure, 'La Majorité confédérale et la guerre'.³³ He attended in July 1916, an interallied syndicalist conference in Leeds, England. Earlier, in March, he had appeared before a banquet of the Fédération des Industriels et des Commerçants Français, where he stated that 'It is necessary that the end of the hostilities mark the advent in France of a democratic economy. One must repay the working class for its large contribution to national

defense [...]'.³⁴ The meeting with French industrialists prompted one syndicalist to demand Jouhaux's resignation as secretary-general.³⁵ Merrheim limited his complaint about Jouhaux's appearance before industrialists to an expression of regret that the latter had acted without consulting the Confederal Committee.

In December 1916 the CGT met to reassess its position and to discuss a note of President Wilson demanding that all belligerent powers define their peace terms. The antiwar minority gathered beforehand to decide on a common strategy for the conference.³⁶ At this meeting Merrheim complained that some minority syndicalists wanted a permanent split from the majority. The Comité pour le Défense du Syndicalisme (CDS), formed in September 1916 by those antiwar syndicalists who found Merrheim too moderate, planned a conference of revolutionary delegates to meet on the eve of the CGT's gathering. Merrheim hoped that the CGT would not play into this group's hands and consummate the split. At another preconference meeting, he advised his friends not to attack and criticize Jouhaux at this moment because provincial delegates might not understand the point of the fight. Raymond Péricat, a leading member of the CDS, and others, however, felt that timing made no difference since their position was correct.³⁷ What they did not understand was that Merrheim's goal was unity with Jouhaux.

When the December conference of the CGT met, delegates debated, among other issues, the attitude and war aims of the CGT's Confederal Committee since August 1914.³⁸ Jouhaux's defense pointed to a reorientation of the traditional revolutionary syndicalist outlook. He openly acknowledged that he had helped and protected workers because he had cooperated with the government. He believed also that his proximity to the authorities permitted him to propagate syndicalist ideas from a national platform. Moreover, talking with employers did not preclude traditional syndicalist action. Struggles could be violent if employers wanted them so; they could be peaceful if the parties negotiated. He advised workers to become more responsible so they could direct important economic affairs. He urged that demands for economic changes be realistic. 'It is indispensable that we obtain the advent of industrial democracy', he said. But workers must not set out to destroy capitalism unless they can replace it with a new economic system. 'It is necessary that the working class make its choice outside of formulas, outside of set words and names', he concluded.³⁹ Merrheim overlooked this new approach to revolutionary syndicalism. He was at the time more concerned that the secretary-general respond to Wilson's note. On this issue all were agreed and the conference unanimously called upon all governments to define their peace objectives

and 'that the French government respond favorably to [Wilson's note]'.⁴⁰

The official reconciliation between Merrheim and Jouhaux came in December 1917 and was directly related to Georges Clemenceau's assumption of power. The latter became prime minister in November 1917. He was charged with reviving the flagging French war effort. In mid-April 1917 a French military offensive against the Germans had failed disastrously. It had coincided with mutinies in the army in May and was followed by the most important labor strikes to date. In 1917, 696 strikes broke out, involving 298,810 strikers. The most serious were those of the clothing makers during May and June and of the war industry workers during the summer and early fall of 1917. By May 1917 many syndicalists were calling for renewed antigovernment action to celebrate May Day and also to demonstrate their support for the Russian revolution. When Clemenceau became prime minister, the CGT had cause for concern. Before Clemenceau, other governments had seemed accommodating to the workers in public, although they were frequently repressive in private. Clemenceau reversed this pattern. For him repression was part of his psychological warfare against workers.⁴¹ In public, the prime minister wanted to appear extremely tough and this precluded official cooperation with the CGT. For their part, the workers remembered Clemenceau as the minister of the interior who called out the troops in the bloody strike of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges in 1908. Under these circumstances, Jouhaux had no choice but to abruptly end his collaboration with the government. Merrheim was waiting to embrace him. Consequently, the majority and minority factions of the CGT met at the Conference of Clermont-Ferrand and agreed to work for peace on the basis of an essentially Zimmerwaldian platform.⁴²

Merrheim and Collaboration

An important link between Merrheim's reformist antiwar campaign and his efforts to reunite the CGT's factions was his overriding concern for the material well-being of the workers. To achieve his ends and to protect acquired gains, he maintained his own unofficial but quite close ties with the government and with Jouhaux, even while he was publically attacking both.⁴³ Merrheim's unpublicized cooperation with the government makes abundantly clear why he never broke definitively with Jouhaux, demonstrates the limits of his revolutionary syndicalism, and portends his choice for a reformist program in the troubled and potentially revolutionary times during and immediately after the war.

Examples of his cooperation with the authorities abound. A few of the more important instances will give the flavor of his double role. In March 1915 the prefect of the Seine formed Mixed Commissions. The commissions, designed to solve any labor difficulties that threatened industrial production, included representatives from government, business, and labor. Merrheim complained that the government had not consulted the CGT about the formation of the commissions nor about the CGT's membership. He regretted, too, that Jouhaux had accepted a position on a Mixed Commission without CGT approval. The Federation of Metalworkers was divided over this issue. One metalworker objected to CGT participation because it meant associating 'with our adversaries'. Another believed that the federation's mild objections so far to events meant that 'We cannot [...] come out today against these mixed commissions'. Merrheim disliked the clear-cut nature of class collaboration implied by membership in such an institution. Yet he did not want to dismiss a vehicle that could assist workers. He proposed a compromise. The Federation of Metalworkers would officially state that it regretted the formation of the Mixed Commissions, but would nevertheless invite its unions to cooperate with them if they wished.⁴⁴

Merrheim bent his principles in a similar fashion when called to testify before public officials. A foe of petitioning in the political arena, he appeared in July 1915 before a Senatorial Commission inquiring about labor conditions among industrial workers. He told the senators that 'we would accept a tampering with our salaries only if the government commandeers the factories'. He implied cooperation if the workers were treated equitably. After the session he could report to his federation that he thought wages would remain unchanged.⁴⁵

On another occasion Merrheim testified before a coalition of left-wing deputies at the Palais-Bourbon. He, along with Jouhaux, went there to explain the causes of labor unrest among younger metalworkers in the Loire Valley in the spring of 1918. In May 1918 many of these strikers were demanding an end to the war.⁴⁶ Merrheim, who had conducted an active antiwar campaign in the valley, was undoubtedly responsible for the awakening of a more revolutionary temper among the metalworkers. He supported the strikers' demands for improvements in their working conditions, but rejected any suggestions for a general strike to protest the war when they emerged. He was instrumental in ending these strikes on the basis of trade union issues.⁴⁷ At the Palais-Bourbon both Jouhaux and Merrheim were anxious to allay the deputies' concerns about these strikes. Jouhaux stated that the workers' ignorance of general conditions in France had caused strikes. Workers wanted the government to take them into its

confidence; it should define its peace terms and recognize the right of workers to have a voice in public affairs. Merrheim used the same argument. 'It is necessary that one speak clearly to the workers, explain to them the goals that are being followed in this war, and give to them the impression that something is being done to promote peace'.⁴⁸

Some in the Federation of Metalworkers criticized Merrheim for appearing before parliamentary organs. He defended himself by noting that contact with the deputies was a logical consequence of remaining within the CGT's Confederal Committee. Moreover, he held that testifying before a parliamentary group was not in itself a political act.⁴⁹ It is difficult to understand what he meant by this since revolutionary syndicalists believed that precisely such contact with parliamentary deputies constituted a breach of principles.

Merrheim had much more direct contact with the government, however, through his participation on the Comité d'Action. On September 9, 1915, the Confederal Committee of the CGT decided 'to get together with the Socialist party for the creation of the Comité d'Action [...]'.⁵⁰ The Comité d'Action came into existence on September 10. Its ostensible function was to assist the public authorities with any matters of interest to workers.⁵¹ It also provided the government with information on supplies, work stoppages, work assignments, and similar matters. In short, the Comité d'Action, worked closely with the government for the production of war materials and for the prosecution of the war itself. To facilitate its job, the committee was divided into eight subcommissions, the most important of which was the Commission du Travail chaired by Merrheim.⁵² In April 1916, the subcommissions were reorganized and Merrheim chaired the one dealing with workers in war industries; Jouhaux, also a member of the committee, headed the subcommission on working conditions and salaries.⁵³

There is the possibility that for the syndicalists the Comité d'Action had another, less public function, namely to prevent any right-wing reaction against the CGT. Jouhaux had warned in early 1915 against the possible arrest of revolutionaries and of a reaction against the left. He advised the CGT to cooperate with the Socialist party to avert this.⁵⁴ Merrheim dismissed this opinion by charging that some would use the pretext of a reactionary peril to join the government in Bordeaux.⁵⁵ He scoffed at the rumor of a reaction against the left only because he wanted to criticize those syndicalists who had joined the union sacrée. In fact, however, there was considerable fear in the CGT of government repression.

In general, the government knew whom to contact for vital information on the war industries. As early as September 1914, Pierre Renaudel, a

Socialist working with the authorities, asked Merrheim to submit a detailed report for Marcel Sembat, the minister of public works, on which factories were capable of producing war materials.⁵⁶ Merrheim obliged with a very detailed report and hoped that the government would extend its good will to those workers who would 'furnish their technical capacity and their efforts'.⁵⁷ On another occasion, Alexandre Millerand, the minister of war, was conducting a campaign against slackers in industry, and he asked the Federation of Metalworkers to tell him who were 'all the unsound workers' who are taking the place 'of the professional worker'. Merrheim agreed 'to furnish this documentation'.⁵⁸

This kind of request from the government was no isolated incident. On another occasion Merrheim was instrumental in providing the army corps of engineers with 5,000 workers from the Bourse du Travail in Paris to build the Camp Retranché de Paris. He also pointed out to the military governor of Paris the advantages of hiring union labor: syndicalists did not demand as much in wages as did nonunion professionals, and the quality of union work was superior, a fact of great importance for national defense. He advised, too, that it was critical 'for morale and very much in the interests of public order and national defense' that no one under contract to the army gain profits or exploit the taxpayer.⁵⁹ Once the camp was finished, he asked the military governor to hire workers 'in accord with the interested union organizations and from the Bourse du Travail of Paris'.⁶⁰

Merrheim's closest and most important contact with the government was Albert Thomas, a Socialist who from October 29, 1914, was secretary of state for artillery, and from December 12, 1916 to September 12, 1917, was minister of armaments. Shortly before he took up his first post, Thomas asked Merrheim to meet him in the offices of the Ministry of Labor. He told Merrheim that the minister of labor had asked him to assist in accelerating the production of war materials. Thomas asked Merrheim to provide information concerning salaries and working conditions in plants producing war goods. The former, in return, would be in a position to help workers in this industry. Merrheim agreed to press at least for workers' claims and his Executive Committee concurred that he should meet periodically with Thomas.⁶¹

Merrheim sent his first report to Thomas in October 1914; it dealt only with trade union matters. In it he reviewed the general state of the metallurgical industry. He pointed out that wages had fallen, hours had increased, and overall conditions had deteriorated. He hoped that Thomas could improve matters. In this report he pointed out, too, that it was the intervention of his federation that had prevented a metalworkers strike in Saint-Nazaire.⁶² The two men continued to cooperate in this fashion

throughout Thomas's tenure in office.⁶³

Merrheim also interceded with the government to perform private favors for workers. In December 1914 officials arrested and put into a detention camp a member of the Federation of Teachers, Julie Bertrand, for her antimilitarist activities. Bertrand's name was on the Carnet B, but it was rare for public authorities to regard teachers as a possible threat in the case of mobilization. Bertrand, however, was a militant anarchist and a contributor to the newspapers *Temps Nouveaux*, *La Femme*, and *Ecole Emancipée*. She had previously been charged with misdemeanors because of her radical activities in 1905 and 1912. Now she was in jail and union officials wrote to Merrheim asking for his assistance. He began to work steadily for Bertrand's release, mostly by petitioning Sembat, the Socialist minister.⁶⁴ On another occasion a man wrote to Merrheim complaining of snags in his application for French citizenship. Would the latter, he asked, speak to Sembat.⁶⁵ Merrheim even went so far as to present a condemned worker's case personally to Clemenceau.⁶⁶

Merrheim's contact with key government officials also protected him. On several occasions Thomas warned him about the dangers of his antiwar campaign. He advised Merrheim that while France was under attack, a peace program was imprudent. He warned him to be cautious: 'don't ruin yourself [...]'. He also informed Merrheim that the government was watching his correspondence, something the latter already knew, and that certain ministers had it out for him.⁶⁷

Merrheim remained out of jail partly because of these timely warnings. Another reason he remained free was explained by his contemporary Hyacinthe Dubreuil. It was the latter's opinion that officials never arrested Merrheim for fear that this would cause repercussions among metalworkers employed in war production.⁶⁸

Not even Clemenceau's advent to power changed much for Merrheim. His first reaction to the new prime minister was fear of arrest for antiwar activities.⁶⁹ He need not have worried, however, because early in December 1917 Clemenceau 'quickly established relations – discretely [...] – with Merrheim, the pacifist leader'.⁷⁰ In a private interview between the two men, Clemenceau 'affirmed to him [Merrheim] his sympathies for the working class'.⁷¹ Later the prime minister proposed that Merrheim undertake a mission to Russia to intercede with Lenin and Trotsky for continuation of the war.⁷² Another time Clemenceau, through an intermediary, suggested that Merrheim join the cabinet to serve as a liaison between the government and organized labor. Merrheim rejected the offer and pointed out how little political leaders knew about the mentality of revolutionary syndicalists.⁷³ Actually, the government had a better idea about the men-

tality of some revolutionary syndicalists than Merrheim could have imagined.

Not all syndicalists approved of Merrheim's double role of government critic and government collaborator. At one meeting of the CGT's Confederal Committee, Joseph Guinchard of the Federation of Transport Workers, shouted: 'But you [Merrheim] belong to a federation that makes the engines of death; if you want peace, call for a general strike of the metalworkers'.⁷⁴ Merrheim answered lamely, 'I estimate that even if one stops the fabrication of munitions and canons, one would not stop the war because the killing would continue by other means. Besides most of the canons come from America'.⁷⁵ At a meeting of the Comité pour la Reprise des Relations Internationales, Merrheim heard himself denounced for working with the Comité d'Action and for cooperating with Jouhaux and Renaudel.⁷⁶ Jouhaux also criticized Merrheim's double role, but for different reasons. He believed that Merrheim should collaborate publically rather than hide this fact.⁷⁷

During the war Merrheim certainly violated the spirit of his own beliefs as far as political neutrality and preparation for the social revolution were concerned. Clearly, he revealed at that time a greater concern for the welfare of the workers than for any revolutionary program. He never admitted this even to himself, and, indeed, following his rationalizations, one gains the impression that he refused to prepare for an antigovernment action because the objective circumstances were not right. Thus, he always pointed out that the CGT did not match the strength of the capitalist state and that to attempt a frontal challenge was unrealistic. However, these conclusions alone do not explain his active cooperation with the government. The fact is that Merrheim's trade unionism had long before blunted his revolution capacity. This became especially significant for the social history of France immediately after the war when Merrheim frustrated and foiled the insurgent strike demands of his own union workers, as we shall see in Part IV.

PART IV
THE POSTWAR CRISIS, 1918-1923

CHAPTER 10

MERRHEIM AND THE NEW SYNDICALISM

From the summer of 1918 to 1921, the years during which the CGT definitively broke apart into reformist and revolutionary factions, Alphonse Merrheim moved steadily and snugly into the ranks of Léon Jouhaux's majority, nonrevolutionary wing of the confederation. This became obvious when the CGT held a national congress in Paris in July 1918, its first since the war had begun. At this time the less perceptive syndicalists began accusing Merrheim of betraying his revolutionary past, his antiwar campaign, and his friends in the minority. Nothing was more false. His politics did not change as much after the war as did the circumstances around him. When revolutionary prospects and choices emerged, he remained fixed within his own reformist mold.

Throughout this period, too, he kept his revolutionary rhetoric intact. He did so because he genuinely and firmly believed in an outmoded and inadequate ideology and his unique interpretation of it. He insisted that revolutionary syndicalism remain faithful to the essential letter of its pre-1914 outlook, namely, that it continue to prepare thoroughly for social revolution, independent of political action, through a program of ameliorations, worker education, and working-class action.

Although verbally Merrheim tried to maintain the basic contours of his revolutionary syndicalist principles, the spirit, emphasis, and content of his writings betray a subtle new orientation of his thought, something more in agreement with his reformist nature and practice. That Merrheim had become a nonrevolutionary leftist mattered because he set an example in the CGT and because a potentially revolutionary moment did exist in postwar France, during the massive strikes of metalworkers in June 1919.

This chapter concentrates on Merrheim's ideological orientation.

Merrheim and the CGT Majority

In 1918, Merrheim openly cast his lot with Jouhaux's majority in the CGT. During that year, social agitation, mostly in the form of strikes, was increasing. The Bolshevik Revolution was becoming more secure. Woodrow

Wilson, responding to Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's ideological appeal, issued the Fourteen Points, a powerful attraction for many workers. The CDS was pressing the CGT to revive its May Day demonstrations and also to support the many spontaneous strikes breaking out, especially the strikes of metalworkers in the Loire Valley. Merrheim, however, ordered the metalworkers to abstain from May Day demonstrations and did not encourage the strikers. This prompted Raymond Péricat to state at a meeting of the CDS,

That for a long time now I have had my suspicions concerning this syndicalist [Merrheim], but I have not said anything; today the issue is very plain; I am waiting for a copy of a letter from the Federation of Metalworkers asking its members to remain silent on May Day. When it arrives I shall rip off the mask behind which Merrheim hides.¹

When no one in the CGT took advantage of the labor agitation, the CDS decided to call a national congress of the confederation to meet in Saint-Etienne in May. Only the minority opposition attended. Georges Dumoulin was president of this congress and Péricat, a central figure. The congress passed three resolutions: the first denounced the *union sacrée* because it represented class collaboration; the second expressed solidarity with the Russian Revolution; the final one supported those workers who had already struck for peace. Dumoulin stated that this minority would continue for the moment to work within the CGT.²

At this time, Merrheim, too, insisted that the secretary-general schedule a national congress of the CGT.³ He objected, however, to the Congress of Saint-Etienne, fearing it would contribute to a split within the confederation.

Because of such pressures, Jouhaux finally issued a call for an official CGT congress. It was scheduled to meet in Paris from July 15 to July 18.

Shortly before this gathering, Merrheim moved one more step closer to Jouhaux. In March 1918 a coalition of left forces – Socialists, syndicalists, and republicans – formed a Ligue d'Action Républicaine. Its purpose was to resist any possible postwar reactionary movement directed against the working class. Among its initial members were Pierre Renaudel, Marcel Cachin, Léon Jouhaux, and Alphonse Merrheim.⁴

An equally important barometer of Merrheim's evolution was the position he defended at the congress of his own federation, which met in Paris from July 10 to 13.⁵ Opponents within the federation charged that their secretary had betrayed the strikers and the war-time minority, that he had shady dealings with the government, and that he was using 'governmental and political' methods.⁶ Merrheim explained that the Loire Valley strikes had broken out as a protest against sending a new class of recruits to the

front. Those already in the trenches for a long time, he said, wanted to return home; they would not support a protest movement to block newer recruits from replacing them. He also rebuked the strikers for heeding the CDS and not the orders of the federation. The CDS was trying to destroy existing organizations, he warned. As for the leadership of the CGT, he explained that he attacked certain of its policies but never believed that it was 'corrupt'. He estimated, moreover, as did the majority, that the workers could never have prevented the outbreak of the war in 1914. He did resent Jouhaux's departure for Bordeaux and his trip to Italy, the refusal to answer the Scandinavian Socialists, and the open cooperation of the CGT with the government. None of this, however, ever prompted him to break with the majority. In his defense, he admitted, too, that he had had interviews with Georges Clemenceau and that the latter had promised a liberal policy towards workers in exchange for industrial peace. Merrheim also acknowledged having talked with Louis Loucheur, the minister of economic reconstruction, concerning the CGT's role in rebuilding the state. No one had initially objected to these conversations, he noted. He concluded by telling the congress that 'We are at the hour when the country needs to be completely revived again'.⁷

The overwhelming majority at this congress – 157 delegates against 16 who abstained – accepted Merrheim's defense. The resolution it passed 'regretted profoundly' the Loire Valley strikes; 'reproved the campaign of the Comité de Defense Syndicaliste', and warned that the 'disastrous decisions and actions' taken at Saint-Etienne would split the CGT. The resolution also condemned secret diplomatic alliances, and reckoned that 'peace must be founded on the following principles: neither annexations, nor conquests, nor indemnities. It also calls again for the rapid resumption of the International'. To the Russian revolutionaries the federation sent only 'its salute and its lively encouragement'. It did, however, condemn the projected Allied intervention in Russia and supported the Russian peoples right to govern themselves.⁸

Merrheim defended these sentiments at the CGT's national congress a few days later. There, although still publically critical of Jouhaux's 1914 policy, he voted with the majority.⁹ The major resolution passed by the congress was based upon the Conference of Clermont-Ferrand. It stated that the CGT wanted peace on the basis of the following points:

No annexations; the right of self-determination; the reconstruction – within the framework of independence and territorial integrity – of nations currently occupied; reparations for damages; the elimination of war indemnities; the prevention of economic warfare following the hostilities; freedom of the straits and the seas; obligatory arbitration of international disputes; formation of a league of nations. These are the conditions which are defined by President Wilson, by the Rus-

sian Revolution in its beginning, and affirmed by all interallied and international demonstrations including Zimmerwald.¹⁰

Merrheim and the 'New Syndicalism'

Peace officially came to Europe in November 1918. On November 24, 1918, Jouhaux formally announced the Minimum Program that the CGT wished for its sacrifices during the war.¹¹ In mid-December, the Comité Confédéral National (CCN), newly formed to direct the CGT between its national congresses, officially adopted this program. Its major demands and principles represented a new departure for revolutionary syndicalism. The Minimum Program opened by embracing Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. It also demanded a place for the working class at the peace conference and insisted that this conference be public. Moreover, it issued a call for an international workers' congress to meet at the same time as the peace conference. Concerning purely national demands, the minimum program called for the right of state employees to unionize, the eight-hour workday, and the privilege of unions to intervene in any question involving work. Related to this last claim was the wish that the government form a National Economic Council. This body, which would include representatives of the working class, would determine a national economic policy. Finally, the state should exercise active control, in the name of the general interest, over the production and consumption of the national riches. In short, the CGT was no longer demanding the end of capitalism through a violent revolution, but rather its transformation in the direction of greater democracy, participation, and control by the workers over the economy. Several workers' delegations had already been in contact with government ministers, hoping that the latter would grant the CGT a significant voice in the peace conference and in the economic reconstruction of France.

Merrheim enthusiastically supported the Minimum Program. So similar, in fact, was this program to ideas he had already espoused, that he had most likely influenced its author, Jouhaux. In any case, he and the secretary-general jointly presented this program to Loucheur in November, and Merrheim vigorously defended the concept before the CCN.¹² The government rejected the Minimum Program, but formed its own Economic Council in July 1919, while the CGT established its own in September.

On November 23, Merrheim and Jouhaux were part of a delegation that conferred with Clemenceau, asking for worker involvement at the diplomatic peace conference. The prime minister held out that possibility, but then broke with the CGT over its plans to revive the May Day

demonstrations in 1919. The government, on the other hand, did grant the CGT collective contracts, the eight-hour workday, and some wage increases, but nothing more fundamental.

On January 19, 1919, Merrheim addressed a group of workers at Corbeil. He published his speech as a pamphlet entitled *La Révolution économique*.¹³ It contains his interpretation of the Minimum Program and is a summary of his postwar philosophy. He began by saying that 'activists must have the simple courage to speak; they must neither be dominated nor dragged along by the unorganized mass, by the unchained crowd, pushed as it is in the street by necessity and claiming as its only personal material satisfaction the augmentation of salaries'.¹⁴ Merrheim defined the essential postwar social problem as a situation in which

those who affirm that one can consume more and produce little deceive the working masses and prepare them for a future of deprivation and unspeakable suffering. Courage [he continued] is the ability to say and to repeat to the masses that each individual is simultaneously a producer and a consumer and that the continual development of production is necessary, indispensable. [... In short] an economic revolution draws its vigor from work and becomes fortified, developed, and completed by intensified production in the countryside, in workshops, in factories by a better utilization of scientific procedures and means of production.¹⁵

The basic solution to France's immediate postwar economic problems, according to Merrheim, was for the workers to help return the country immediately to economic normalcy and simultaneously to intensify production. Workers must temporarily put aside their desires for more consumption until they assured the revival of the economy with sacrifices leading to increased production.

Merrheim had taken a basic dictum of revolutionary syndicalism, namely, the belief that workers should agitate only economically, and translated it into the prescription that workers had to reorganize the economic life of the nation as quickly as possible. He asked rhetorically if a political revolution could solve the nation's economic problems, and answered that it could not, because a revolution sparked by a general strike would only 'completely halt production which would throw the country into famine'.¹⁶ Moreover, a real revolution was not a 'political' revolution, where state power is merely transferred from one party to another; rather, an authentic revolution was an 'economic revolution' in which the capacity of the nation is intensified for the benefit of all.¹⁷ The economic revolution

is impossible [to accomplish] by violence alone because it is the social milieu that must be transformed, the economic life that must be ensured. It is, in a word, to put the hand on the instruments of production and to be capable of assuring the direction and functioning, for example, of the redistribution of the products that the proletariat creates. In a word, to realize the true economic emancipation of the working class.¹⁸

Very early, too, Merrheim was suspicious of the direction which the Russian and German revolutions might pursue. He praised the Russian Revolution but only insofar as it had a democratic economic program; for him its economic policies had to satisfy the needs and demands of the masses. He believed that the Revolution did this in its initial stages when Lenin paid attention to the wishes of the Soviet. He warned in 1919, however, that an economic program should not be directed by a few from above and that the political transfer of power from one group to another by violence was meaningless unless linked to an economic revolution directed and guided by the masses.¹⁹ So for the rest of the year he watched the Bolsheviks wearily.

As for the German Revolution, Merrheim rejected the lesson some in France were drawing from it, namely, that French workers, too, should revolt. France had won the war, he pointed out, and consequently the revolutionary spirit was lacking there. 'The masses in France believe that the victory shall lead rapidly to an amelioration of its situation'. Success in the war has 'robbed the masses of their revolutionary zeal. They now anticipate a better future'.²⁰ The best way to achieve this new order, Merrheim believed, was for the workers to adopt the Minimum Program.

According to Merrheim, the Minimum Program had four major components. First, the hope for a better international fraternity of nations resided in the program of Woodrow Wilson. Merrheim thought of Wilson as 'the only man who, today in the capitalist society, best represents and defends the peace aspirations of the working class [...]'. Wilson's peace proposals, Merrheim stated, represented a peace in favor of the people and not governments. Consequently, the workers should welcome the American president when he arrived in France and support him in establishing a peace to end all wars.²¹

Second, the CGT demanded 'the syndicalist right', by which he meant that workers' organizations should be the exclusive representatives of workers and have the sole privilege of 'collective discussions' with employers' associations. Workers had earned the right of collective discussions with employers because of their wartime sacrifices.²² This was a far cry from the formula for 'direct action', which signified direct and forceful confrontations between workers and employers.

Merrheim's third point concerned a shorter workday. Before the war he had demanded the eight-hour workday. After the war he was not too rigid with regard to this question. In some industries, he wrote, employers could institute a nine hour workday and then over several years reduce it to eight hours.²³

Finally, Merrheim believed that the new society, and this was something

that applied especially to postwar France, absolutely needed to 'maximize production in the minimum amount of time for the maximum amount of wages'. This required the utilization of all the current scientific advances in the service of the work process. Even Taylorism should be introduced into factories, since the resulting industrial efficiency would help France and the French worker in a difficult moment.²⁴ Merrheim's adoption of Taylorism, which had begun in 1914, was now complete.

Despite the transformation in Merrheim's thought and spirit, he could state that 'the Minimum Program proposed by the CGT is not class collaboration, but a base of action for the liberation of work and the complete emancipation of the workers'.²⁵ No matter what he said about revolution, however, this seemed a program for a workers' democracy designed to operate within the framework of capitalism and republicanism.

Merrheim took another significant step toward open accommodation with reformist ideology when he attended a labor conference in Berne in February 1919.²⁶ The conference represented sixteen countries – Russia was not one of them – whose worker delegates met to prepare an international charter of work for inclusion in the final peace treaty. At the meeting all but the French delegates (among whom Jouhaux, Dumoulin, and Merrheim were the most important) wanted discussions to center around the work charter. The French, however, also introduced a resolution expressing support for the League of Nations. The Scandinavian and Swiss representatives objected because the League of Nations was a political issue; they wanted the Conference of Berne to discuss only economic and worker related topics. Jouhaux countered that 'the war was a rather cruel proof imposed upon the workers that they can no longer remain disinterested in the organization of society'. It fell to Merrheim, however, to provide the longest defense of the French position. 'I cannot accept the formally rigid and legalistic point of view [of those] who consider the question of the 'League of Nations' as a political matter [...]'. The revolutionary syndicalist movement must confront a new reality; the war had put a new construction on all the prewar national congresses. The war had forced all workers to become political in the sense that they now thought about its outbreak and its horrible consequences, he stated. The League of Nations, which he labeled a workers' issue, could hopefully prevent another major conflagration. It should also incorporate the charter of work.²⁷

The Conference of Berne accepted this position and resolved that there should be national organizations and an international organization of work that would permit the rational arrangement of world production. The efficacy of international legislation concerning work could only be

guaranteed by the establishment of an International Office of Labor, which should be an integral part of a League of Nations.²⁸

By early 1919, Merrheim was powerfully attracted to Woodrow Wilson and passionately committed to the unity of the CGT. He welcomed the victory of the Russian Revolution over Tsarist oppression but wondered whether Lenin might destroy genuine workers' democracy. He certainly rejected Lenin's thesis that a political party lead the workers' movement.

Still, during the winter of 1919, the argument could be made that no objective revolutionary situation existed in France and that Merrheim was merely adopting himself to a period of waiting and preparation. During the summer of 1919, however, a revolutionary potential did emerge. Chapter 11 deals with how Merrheim reacted to this condition.

CHAPTER 11

THE JUNE METALWORKERS' STRIKE, 1919

In 1919, strikes and revolutions erupted in Europe that seemed to threaten the very foundations of liberal capitalism. In Italy 150,000 Turinese workers left their jobs and elected revolutionary factory councils. In Hungary, during the spring and summer, a soviet republic emerged under Bela Kun. Bavarians experienced a similar government, while Berliners witnessed the Spartacist-Communist bid for revolutionary power. In this same year Russian communists established the Third International to spark and coordinate anticapitalist movements in Europe. At that time also an international general strike to protest Allied intervention in Russia and Hungary had begun in Italy. Meanwhile, metalworkers in France staged a wildcat strike movement for a shorter workday, but also to start a revolution against the government. Soon after, the CGT prepared a one day general strike to show support for the Russian and Hungarian communists. A revolutionary that year could hope for important political changes throughout Europe, whereas those committed to order had cause for worry.

Concerning France, one historian has correctly pointed out that in 1919 three major events – workers' plans for extensive demonstrations on May 1 for the eight-hour workday; the wildcat strike of the metalworkers; and the CGT's project for a general strike on July 21 – might have signaled the beginning of a revolution in France.¹ The government, however, defused the May Day design by granting the eight-hour workday in April 1919. The CGT's general strike did not materialize fully because many federations refused to go out. The 1919 metalworkers strike, on the other hand, caused a great concern in government and syndicalist circles because it was a widespread, grassroots movement, potentially explosive, and possibly revolutionary. The June strike did not, however, despite its promise, represent the first step in a revolutionary process, and that was because an important dichotomy between mass action and Merrheim's leadership caused the strike to fail.

In 1919 the sheer number of metalworkers on strike was impressive and frightening. In the first year of the war, they, like workers in other industries, were relatively quiet. In 1914, a total of 160,566 workers were in-

volved in 672 strikes, and of these 16,009 were metalworkers in 73 strikes.² In the previous year 220,448 workers had participated in 1,073 strikes. Of this total the metalworkers accounted for 139 strikes with 23,335 participants.³ Strikes increased as the war progressed and from 1915 to 1918 a total of 520,750 workers walked off their jobs; 95,004 of them were metalworkers.⁴ But in 1919 alone 2,026 strikes engaged 1,150,718 strikers. Of these the greatest number, 329,242, were metalworkers.⁵ What appeared even more ominous was the staggering number of strikers for the single month of June. In the Paris region alone, where most of the metalworkers' agitation occurred, 170,750 metalworkers struck. Compare this with the 2,950 metalworkers who went out in the Department of the Seine in April or with the 7,180 in May. After June the figure dropped as rapidly as it rose during June. Only 1,500 metalworkers struck in the department in July, 100 in August, and 100 in October.⁶ It was this concentration of strikes in one month that gave the metalworkers' movement such a menacing and dangerous tone.

Officially the government reported that the strike movement was caused by workers' demands for a shorter work-week and for higher wages.⁷ This was certainly an important claim in 1919, one that played a major role in sparking the strike in late May and early June. Other factors operated too: war weariness, military failures, and the advent of Georges Clemenceau to power as prime minister made the French worker more susceptible to antigovernment feelings. But neither the government nor even the leaders of the Federation of Metalworkers was willing to admit or recognize that at the core of many of the strikers' claims were political demands. The striking metalworkers wanted the French government to recognize the Bolshevik Revolution, grant amnesty for all political and military prisoners, and begin demobilization. They also wanted their strike to signal the beginning of an antigovernment action, a grab for political power by the workers. Indeed the potential for a revolutionary movement was there but it was frustrated by the workers' own leaders.

In 1919, metalworkers hoped that the secretary of their Federation, Alphonse Merrheim, would commit the resources of the national union to their cause and also assume a leadership role in the strike.⁸ Merrheim, however, provided only limited assistance, and this was exclusively for the strikers' economic demands. He completely rejected their political aims, argued that there was little sentiment among the workers for them, and that political issues were being raised by nonunion workers and forces opposed to the federation. He, therefore, withheld the federation's support and prompted the CGT to do the same. Negotiating with the employers on strictly narrow economic issues, he played a major role in ending the

metalworkers' strike and completely thwarted its political content. The premises upon which he acted, however, were mostly false, because the political issues were central to the strikers' goals and this raises a question concerning Merrheim's motives and perceptions.

The Strike Movement

On June 2, 1919, thirteen Parisian metalworkers' unions, representing more than 150,000 people, struck their employers without the approval of the Federation. Their basic initial claim was economic – they wanted a forty-four-hour workweek, 150 francs for professional workers, 132 francs for specialized day laborers, and 110 francs for common laborers; several union leaders also expressed political objectives: they wished French workers to demonstrate their support for the Russian communists, for a program of amnesty for political and military prisoners, and also to prepare for a revolution in France. What immediately precipitated the walkout was a disagreement between the Parisian unions and the Federation of Metalworkers over an accord the federation had signed with employers on April 17, which established the eight-hour workday. Since early April representatives of industrialists and the Federation of Metalworkers had begun designing an agreement to implement the eight-hour workday in the metallurgical industry. The employers consented to this reform on April 17 and indicated that they would apply it by June 1. The steel magnates agreed to the shorter workday to deflate the workers' planned demonstrations for May Day. For its part, the federation had finally obtained a long sought-after goal. However, differences remained to be ironed out between the two groups: the pact, for example, consented to the shorter workday 'in principle' and some salary schedules needed clarification; local unions also would have the right to negotiate technical matters separately. Meanwhile, a Comité d'Entente des Syndicats de la Région Parisienne, representing thirteen unions, amended its own demands to the national accord. Most prominently, it wanted the eight-hour workday and the forty-four-hour workweek, while the federation had accepted the forty-eight-hour workweek. The Parisian unions insisted on an answer to their petition by May 2. The industrialists replied that they would respond by June 5, which the unions found an unacceptable delay. The latter believed that the employers would resist the forty-four-hour workweek, which the unions regarded as essential. 'The situation appears, under these circumstances, very menacing', the unions believed.⁹ Concurrently, the federation continued its own talks with industrialists and even arranged a

meeting between them and the Paris unions. Crucial discussions took place on May 23, and the following day the federation signed a contract with the employers based upon the eight-hour workday and the forty-eight-hour workweek. The Parisian unions were still in the middle of their own conference with the owners and these talks completely undercut their position; it became the first source of serious conflict between them and their federation.

Immediately after the strike movement in late July, the federation explained that the May 24 accord was superior to the old one because it no longer applied the phrase 'in principle' to describe the employers' intent. The federation had also established the right to bargain a contract with the bosses. It implied further that the requests of the Parisian unions were unreasonable, and that no one had complained about the forty-eight-hour workweek when the federation agreed to it originally. 'This accord only furnishes some indispensable precisions and establishes without equivocation and without any possible false interpretation the eight-hour workday for a six-day workweek. It[the federation] is consequently opposed to the alteration of the eight-hour workday reform that constitutes an important point definitively secured'.¹⁰

Those who wanted the forty-four-hour workweek saw the situation differently. Some 1,500 workers from Puteaux and Suresnes gathered at Puteaux on May 30 and heard one speaker say that 'The Federation of Metalworkers has been lacking in its duty in signing an agreement with the employers without having consulted the working class beforehand; we do not abide by this agreement'.¹¹ Leclerc of the Comité Intersyndical of Puteaux announced that 'Tomorrow evening there shall be a meeting at which we shall receive the employers' response. I can tell you that a strike of the whole steel industry is being considered for Monday, June 2'. He then added something that was to be heard with increasing frequency from this point on: 'The automobile and aviation industries also shall go on strike and who knows but from this moment shall emerge our beautiful revolution'.¹² The workers applauded wildly.

On May 31, the Comité d'Entente met with the Conseils Syndicaux, member organizations, to devise a formal response to the federation and the employers. They unanimously agreed to call a general strike in the metallurgical industry. The Comité d'Entente then held three meetings on June 1, at the Bourse du Travail, and the workers agreed to the general strike. The police estimated that by noon on June 2, 85,000 of 200,000 metalworkers in the region had walked off their jobs. By that evening, with 84,822 workers out, the strike had completely swept Paris and the immediate suburbs. By June 3, more than 150,000 metalworkers in the Department of the Seine had struck.¹³

From the very beginning a significant number of strikers saw the walkout in political as well as economic terms. At one of the June 1 meetings, where 5,000 had gathered, Veber of the sheet metal union insisted not only on the equality of wages for all skills, a rather radical economic proposal, but also on the cessation of Allied intervention in Russia, government amnesty for political and military prisoners, and immediate demobilization. The audience 'adhered to Veber's proposal'.¹⁴ At another meeting that day a twenty year old soldier asked that the strike go beyond economic issues and include demonstrations for the same principles that Veber had wanted. One syndicalist there, however, protested that the strike was essentially economic and should remain so.¹⁵ The prevailing sentiment of the strike leaders, however, was expressed by a worker at the evening meeting of June 1, which 1,500 workers attended: 'In effect this strike shall not merely be corporative; above all it shall be revolutionary. The moment has come to wring from the employer the maximum well-being; it is necessary to go to the very end'. According to a police report, the employers, too, 'consider the movement as political and even revolutionary'.¹⁶ Officially, therefore, on June 2, the Parisian unions went out on strike for the forty-four-hour workweek and new salary schedules. An important number of workers also had well-defined political aims and wanted the federation to lead the strike on the basis of their terms.

The content of their political program indicates the sophisticated stance of many of the strikers and the presence of a distinct revolutionary consciousness and spirit. The city of Saint-Denis experienced some rather forceful demonstrations. At one meeting a union leader, Emile Arthur Bestel, noted that other corporations, especially the transport and railway workers, were joining the strike, 'which is assuming consequently a temper of social transformation'.¹⁷ Bestel, a socialist, was secretary of the Comité Intersyndical and the Comité de Grève, and he consistently championed the transformation of the strike into a revolutionary movement.¹⁸ Because of this the Federation of Metalworkers singled him out as a troublemaker.¹⁹ Bourreau, adjoint au Mairie de Saint-Denis, assured the strikers that the city would help them. The mayor of Saint-Denis, Gaston-Gabriel Philippe, who was also a member of the minority wing of the Socialist party and adhered to the Comité pour la Reprise des Relations Internationales, exhorted the strikers not to settle for economic ameliorations but to unite with the international proletariat to destroy the capitalist society.²⁰ The following day, June 3, Philippe addressed the townsfolk from the balcony of his office: 'Comrades, quite soon the red flag of the Comité Intersyndical shall replace the one that you see rolled up at that window.

While waiting, tighten up your ranks to induce the strikers to drive out the 'national Tiger' [Clemenceau] and make the revolution'. On the morning of June 4, 3,000 strikers passed a resolution: 'The Comité Intersyndical of Saint-Denis transforms itself into the Executive Committee of the Soviet and addresses an ultimatum to the government that it cede its place to the working class'. And 'In those instances where the CGT activists don't join in this action, they shall be replaced by new men'.²¹

At another meeting in Saint-Denis, this one on June 5, 8,000 metalworkers heard Joseph Tommasi of the union of automobile and aviation workers ask them to 'Salute the navies of the Black Sea and the soldiers of Toulouse who have refused to serve as police to save the faltering bourgeoisie. Today it is no longer a question of money; what we want is to run out old Clemenceau and his dog [Georges] Mendel. It is our turn to hold the reigns of power'. Philippe ended this rally by declaring that 'The bourgeoisie was able to contain the Commune of 1871, but today Saint-Denis shall revive it more powerfully than ever'.²²

Workers in other unions were equally determined to start a social revolution and also quite cognizant of what issues constituted an effective revolutionary program and appeal. As early as May 12, 600 metalworkers' delegates meeting in Paris voted to strike not for higher wages but 'to protest against the calling of the new recruits, and then against the war'.²³ Louviat, a syndicalist from Suresnes, stated that 'what we want is nationalization, which means the reorganization of the factories by the producers'.²⁴ In Paris another syndicalist, Joseph Couergou, counseled the workers to take possession of the means of production.²⁵ These appeals were already familiar to revolutionary syndicalists and well within the ambit of traditional revolutionary syndicalist goals.

At the Maison Citroën, a syndicalist leader noted that the employers kept a file on each worker; the latter dreaded and hated these dossiers, which could circulate from one employer to another and could be used to blackball certain workers. '[...] the file cards must no longer exist [...]', he said. Only the overthrow of Clemenceau and the existence of a revolutionary regime could guarantee the disappearance of industrialists such as André Citroën, Louis Loucheur, Louis Renault, men who had acquired colossal personal fortunes, he concluded. At the same meeting, another syndicalist declared that an accord had been reached between some unions of seamen, railway workers, and miners to demand the end of French intervention in Russia. The strikers responded to this news by unanimously demanding that the government grant full amnesty for political and military prisoners and achieve total demobilization, an oft heard cry.²⁶ It was not far-fetched that an extensive strike movement, especially in the

crucial sectors of the economy, could force some political changes.

Speaking in Levallois before 4,000 workers, Couergou appealed to a shared sentiment and frustration in the strikers. 'Recall first the sufferings you have endured at the front, then in the factories, where over several years the bosses have made you into slaves'. It was time workers asserted their right to control the means of production and govern themselves, he concluded. At the same gathering, Leclerc, secretary-general of the union of automobile and aviation workers, noted that the cost of living was rising daily 'in a scandalous manner'. Workers will no longer be slaves, he said; 'The hour is grave, that's for sure and we know it; but we do not hesitate to assume our responsibilities; the bosses and the government must take theirs'.²⁷ Rising prices hurt and frustrated wage earners and one report noted that a poster was circulating in the city markets of Montbrison and Saint-Etienne that stated that 'when the strike comes, some persons shall leave Saint-Etienne to set the torch to the large farms, because it is the peasants who are starving us, and who start, and profit from the high cost of living'.²⁸

Syndicalists also saw the possibility of linking their strike with similar movements in other countries. Raimbault, a secretary of the strike committee, read from a manifesto of the Hungarian Republic that proclaimed the equality of soldiers, peasants, and workers. Another syndicalist spoke in favor of the Soviets and discussed the organization of communist soup kitchens in France.²⁹ An Italian worker addressed strikers in the Thirteenth Arrondissement of Paris and proclaimed that plans were afoot to organize an international work stoppage for the workers' cause. A French syndicalist reminded the participants to demand amnesty, demobilization, and support for Soviet Russia.³⁰ Veber of the union of sheet metal workers stated that 'The moment has come for us to demonstrate our solidarity toward the proletariat of all nations. Everywhere the masses are protesting against the domination of capitalism. In Italy, England, and France, these masses must act together to prevent by all possible means the governments of the Entente from continuing their intervention against the Russian and Hungarian revolutionary workers'.³¹ These were sound arguments being ventilated in France and Europe in 1919. In fact, the CGT and the Socialist party were, at that time, preparing an international general strike to protest Allied intervention in Hungary and Russia with workers organizations in Italy, England, and Belgium. From the perspective of the police, however, these events only gave cause for alarm: 'The imminence of this vast agitation has stirred up the fervor of the extremists'.³²

Not all union leaders favored political ends. A few counseled more modest demands, but only so that the workers could gain some reforms.

Even many moderates, however, did not outrightly reject the political program. At Bilancourt, Couergou announced that the leaders of the federation were conferring with the minister of labor. The former reported that 'People are accusing us of wishing to create agitation to play Germany's game, that is to say, to block the peace treaty. Therefore, we have to demonstrate that we have left the factories solely to impose our work conditions. This is neither the place nor the time to discuss social questions; but that moment shall come'. At the same assembly someone else added that 'The time shall come when we shall call upon you for issues other than those [the economic issues] that currently preoccupy us. That time is not here yet. While waiting, organize yourselves, educate yourselves, and above all unite in your respective unions'.³³ Prost, secretary of the machinists' union, on the other hand, stated that he believed that most workers had gone out for material gains; they would not have struck primarily to support a revolution. A syndicalist interrupted him to state that workers did indeed want a revolution. Prost answered that the strikers had gained nothing so far and that 'you [will] find yourselves alone in front of government machines guns', if political demands are made to Clemenceau. He concluded by calling for a strictly economic movement and advised workers not to be sidetracked into politics by socialists.³⁴ In this strike, however, those urging political ends were not only socialists but revolutionary syndicalists.

As the strike began to take on a political tone, the Comité d'Entente revealed that it was committed only to economic goals. On June 3, it met with industry delegates and the minister of labor, Pierre Colliard. The committee decided to accept as the basis for discussion the conventions of April 17 and May 24.³⁵ When employers published the workers' political demands to discredit the strikes, the Comité d'Entente expressed concern that the politically minded strikers would endanger any chance for success with economic claims. The chairman of the committee, André Dumercq, advised the strikers to remain exclusively on the corporate level.³⁶ Not surprisingly this caused friction between the Comité d'Entente and those urging political ends. When the committee met again on June 9 and voted to maintain the struggle in the economic arena, the Comité Intersyndical de Saint-Denis presented a motion to 'place the current movement neatly on the ground of the class struggle'. The agent who reported this statement also noted that the Comité d'Entente rejected the motion.³⁷ Nevertheless, many strikers resisted the conservative advice. On June 15, 500 metalworkers from the Fifteenth Arrondissement agreed unanimously that

The strikers of the 15th arrondissement [...] remain resolved to continue the strike; they declare that they shall not be duped by the dilatory procedures that the activists of the CGT are employing to discredit the general strike; they invite the latter to quit the central administration and let their place be taken by others who have the confidence of the workers' organizations.³⁸

On June 17, another 300 strikers from the same district voted to continue the walkout and left a union meeting with cries of 'Long live the International! Long live the free and organized proletariat'.³⁹ In fact, on June 17, the Comité de Grève de Saint-Denis did convince all Parisian unions to continue the strike. To resist the conservative policy of the Comité d'Entente, 'political' strikers formed their own, insurgent Comité d'Action, which was headed by Bestel of Saint-Denis and included leaders from the radical sectors of the strike. The Comité de Grève then proceeded to organize conferences in the leading provincial metallurgical centers to urge a revolutionary general strike.⁴⁰ On June 23 the police reported that syndicalists, especially those from Puteaux and Saint-Denis, were urging that the strike become more general, political, and revolutionary. These syndicalists advised the workers against considering any negotiations with the employers.⁴¹

Syndicalists who sought political ends were most hostile toward the secretaries of the Federation of Metalworkers, especially toward Merrheim, because their negative attitude was decisive. The secretaries could have lent the support of the federation and enlisted the assistance of the CGT if they wished. However, they opposed expanding the strike beyond narrow economic claims; they wanted only wage adjustments within the framework of the forty-eight-hour workweek. The secretaries, therefore, refused all help for any political ends and negotiated with the employers on economic terms. Representatives from industry, the government, the federation secretaries, and the Comité d'Entente met from June 12 to June 21, at which time they reached a settlement. It provided for some wage increases, the eight-hour workday, and the forty-eight-hour workweek. By June 28, the federation was able to force the agreement upon the Parisian leaders because, isolated, the Parisian radicals could not hold out by themselves. The strike was over.

The Federation Secretaries: Alphonse Merrheim

The men who shared power with Merrheim were Raoul Lenoir and Henri Labe.⁴² In opposing the strike none had worked out any thoughtful reasons of principle for rejecting the revolutionary program. Certainly they might

have denounced the strike because traditionally revolutionary syndicalists opposed political goals and activities. However, the secretaries never used this argument; they knew that the strikers frequently meant 'revolutionary' when they used the word 'political'. In some instances the strikers made this clear and in others it was understood that their call for support of the Russian Revolution and other communist regimes, the demand for amnesty and demobilization were linked by the strikers to the revolutionary seizure of power at home through the general strike. In any case, how could Merrheim and the others oppose these aims on the basis of principle when at the time he was actively preparing a one day general strike with Léon Jouhaux to protest Allied intervention in Russian and Hungary? The strikers at least did not limit their aims in this fashion, but demanded something that the CGT had always stated was its fundamental goal – namely, revolution.

Merrheim repudiated the political goals because he was no longer a revolutionary and therefore never studied or considered the potential the strikes offered for sweeping change. His co-secretaries seemed to share his attitude. Lenoir estimated that the strike was basically economic; 'however, we see that the right-wing press as well as that of the left, with intentionally misleading comments, has given the strike a political character'. He added that if the strike was political then the CGT, which had considerable power, should support it. But since it was not, he concluded, the syndicalist directors should not blindly follow the masses.⁴³ The strike, of course, was political and it was strange that a syndicalist leader denied the spontaneous strike action of his rank-and-file, whom he scornfully referred to as the 'masses'. Labe even noted, with apparent fear, that if the Federation of Railroad Workers struck, the metalworkers' strike would take on a political character that would spread to other organizations.⁴⁴ None of the secretaries, therefore, approved any financial aid for political ends.

For his part, Merrheim had once stated, 'I must say that what I find serious in the current situation is to transform in mid-stream an economic strike into a political strike'.⁴⁵ Was this some new theoretical position or old principle of the CGT? There was nothing in revolutionary syndicalist theory indicating that an economic strike could not be the first rung of the revolutionary ladder. Merrheim, however, was adamant: 'If this transformation continues it will be necessary to tell the strikers that we will no longer talk with the employers, and we warn the workers that we will cease all our relations with the public powers'.⁴⁶ After a survey of the strike movement, he concluded that 'it is really far-fetched to represent this strike to us as a movement made for revolution'.⁴⁷ He also reported to the CGT

that 'we have been, in truth, victims of *agents provocateurs*'. According to him, the cries for revolution in the streets also came from non-union labor, 'this non-unionized mass', which caused all the trouble. Therefore, 'we are obliged to be concerned with the situation, but not to take decisions under the influence of the cries that are rising in the street'.⁴⁸ To his federation Merrheim reported that union meetings during the strike were swamped by non-union people; this wasted valuable time, he said, because these newcomers were constantly demanding membership cards.⁴⁹ A strange complaint from a federation secretary who should have been pleased with increased membership roles – until one realizes that this influx of new people was undoubtedly sparked by a radicalization caused by the strike movement and that the newer recruits were certainly among those calling for revolution. Another argument Merrheim used against the strike was that it lacked the support of the CGT, without which it could not succeed.⁵⁰ Yet he was the very person who refused to ask the CGT to back the strike.

Merrheim also indicated that he did not want the strike to continue because it interfered with the CGT's plans for the July 21 protest, and he preferred to wait for this event.⁵¹ In early June, Italian, Belgian, British, and French syndicalists agreed to stage simultaneous demonstrations in their respective countries to object to the Allied intervention in Russia and Hungary and to demand amnesty and demobilization.⁵² The CGT decided to hold a one-day general strike on July 21, and set about trying to obtain support for it. The barometer of militancy was highest, however, in May and June and those federations that could ensure the success of the protest, the railway workers, postmen, and transportation workers, were already spent from activities before July.⁵³ Merrheim certainly was unrealistic to think that he could dissuade his own rank-and-file only to excite them again at a later date. The most radical group in the June strike, the Comité de Greve, announced that to avenge the treachery of the federation it would not participate in the July 21 remonstrance.⁵⁴ But Merrheim wanted to take part in the CGT's movement, even if it was of a political nature, because it was so limited in scope, and quite official and controlled, in short, a rather safe demonstration. However, because it is difficult to artificially revive a sense of urgency, nothing came of July 21, and Merrheim had merely succeeded in dampening the ardour of some of his most radical members.

It is possible, of course, to believe, as Jean-Paul Brunet, historian of Saint-Denis, does, that Merrheim and other CGT leaders made an objective assesment of conditions in the summer of 1919 and concluded that it was not possible to transform the metalworkers' strike activity into a general revolutionary strike.⁵⁵ This viewpoint is based partly on the

assumption that despite the massiveness of the strikes and the revolutionary language of the strikers, 'the strike movement remained pacific'. Regardless of the extent of the June strike 'we do not have here the image of an all-powerful proletariat'.⁵⁶ The police and the government, moreover, were aware of this and remained confident that nothing would get out of control. To be on the safe side, however, the police stationed 17,000 troops in Paris – an act known to the syndicalist leaders.⁵⁷ The criticism leveled against emphasizing Merrheim's negative role and its importance in the metalworkers' strike challenges a central premise in this chapter, namely, that the objective context was potentially revolutionary.⁵⁸ Brunet, the critic of my assumption, notes that syndicalists could not have called a general strike because other federations did not support the metalworkers' strike and because 'the revolutionary spirit of the metalworkers themselves remained very superficial'.⁵⁹

There are several problems with this argument. First, even Brunet admits that in 1919 unemployment and the rapid rise in the cost of living gave rise in the workers' mentality to a great hope in the revolutionary movements in Central Europe. He notes that the walkout of the metalworkers of the Department of the Seine on June 2 was so extensive that 'the workers' mobilization is therefore massive and the general impression is that of a great movement about to begin'.⁶⁰ Brunet then proceeds to ignore or contradict such a judgment. He does indicate that 90 percent of the Parisian metro workers struck on June 3 and that they were joined by 80,000 chemical workers from June 9.⁶¹ However, the truck drivers never struck, but only refused to transport troops and war-material against Russia. Moreover, on June 16 the transportation workers resumed work as the chemical workers did on June 19. In addition, none of these federations ever contacted the metalworkers.

The key issue, however, is what Merrheim made of all these events and what effect his actions had or did not have on the strikers. Here we come to the heart of the matter. To say that Merrheim never pursued the possibility of a general strike because other federations did not support the metalworkers, or because government troops were ready, or because, generally speaking, there was no revolutionary potential, is to become hopelessly involved in a tautological argument: there was no revolution and hence there was no revolutionary potential to begin with. Rather, the question we ask is, given the possibility of a revolutionary general strike, especially early in June, why did Merrheim not explore that possibility with other federations and the CGT leadership? To say that one of the objective reasons for this failure was Merrheim's own reformist character is not to deny that conditions may not have been ideal. Instead, it is to take into ac-

count the important role of such a leader and to include that, too, among the objective conditions which may or may not spark a revolution.

The political strike leaders certainly believed that Merrheim was instrumental in the outcome of the metalworkers' strike and they attacked his role. Their arguments were revealing about the issues at stake. One delegate from Saint-Denis attacked the Comité d'Entente because 'This organization has committed a grave mistake in authorizing a partial reprise of work; it is a dangerous split that we must stop right away'.⁶² At a meeting of the strikers of the Eighteenth Arrondissement in Paris, a syndicalist stated that

Therefore, yesterday, when your delegation presented itself to Merrheim in order to ask for an account of matters, this 'gentleman' found that he would rather be with Mr. Loucheur, the minister, rather than with your humble but honest company. He does not remember that it is to you that he owes his post and that he must account to you for the mandate you have given him. Oh well, comrades, Merrheim, Jouhaux, Bidegaray, Laurent and Company, have sold themselves to Clemenceau and his clique.⁶³

Indeed, Merrheim was at the time negotiating with government officials to end the strike.

On another occasion the National Council of the Federation of Metalworkers met to decide whether to continue the strike.⁶⁴ Merrheim, Joseph Lauche, a deputy, Henri Labe, and Marius Blanchard were among the approximately fifteen people attending. Nearly seventy five strikers and the Comité d'Action from Saint-Denis waited outside. The committee asked permission to report to the parent body on the situation in Paris. When the council denied this request, the Comité d'Action forced its way into the conference room. A reporter stated that 'Merrheim and Lauche protested vehemently against this intrusion'. Nevertheless Bestel was able to tell the council that his committee represented the majority of the Parisian strikers and that the federation officials could not properly inform the council, which was made up of provincial delegates, on the situation in Paris. Merrheim and others on the council argued against the revolutionaries. Bestel summed up his position:

If the movement had originally been trade union in nature, it is no longer that today. All the strikers have stated in their meetings what we have been saying all these days, namely that they have not left the factories simply because of money, but above all in order to realize their social demands, like the removal of troops from Russia, demobilization, and amnesty.⁶⁵

Even if he exaggerated, political demands were certainly part of the objectives of many of the strikers and the federation leaders could have exploited that sentiment. The meeting resolved nothing and was suspended.

Bestel made a telling point the day the strike ended (June 28). Merrheim, he said, 'is no longer the same person he was at the Conferences of Kienthal and Zimmerwald [...]. He has not understood the aspirations of the working class. The moment has become clearly revolutionary, but the government, through the intervention of Jouhaux and others, has sidetracked it'.⁶⁶ Although Merrheim was not at Kienthal, Bestel's point was well taken because Merrheim's wartime role and general rhetoric gave him a reputation for being a committed revolutionary.

When Bestel admitted that the fight was lost, he asked the strikers to return to work with heads held high and to fight any sanctions the employers might impose.⁶⁷ It was a farewell speech very similar to the one Merrheim gave to the strikers of Hennebont in 1906, in his more militant days.⁶⁸

In 1918, when metalworkers struck in the Loire Valley, Merrheim had argued that the strikes were not broad enough or the moment appropriate to warrant a call for a general strike, either in the metallurgical industry or by the CGT.⁶⁹ It might have appeared at that time that he refused to lead this agitation for tactical reasons only. In 1919, however, such an excuse was no longer valid, and Merrheim did not employ it. His activities and statements during the June 1919 metalworkers' strike leave the strong impression that for him any revolutionary action was simply out of the question.

CHAPTER 12

MERRHEIM'S FINAL CRISIS

During the June strikes Merrheim had turned down one opportunity to side with the revolutionary forces in France. After the strikes he turned down another, by refusing to join with the growing troops of international communist adherents. Instead, he preferred Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations and a united and reformist CGT working through the Third Republic for greater worker democracy. This he believed would someday result in the ultimate social revolution. Yet in his last year he merely played out to its logical (and tragic, as we shall see) end his progress toward reformism, democracy, and antirevolutionary behavior.

The Attack Against Merrheim

Immediately after the June strikes Merrheim found himself under increasing attack from his former friends in the minority. At the congress of his own federation, he was reproved for his negative behavior in the summer of 1919. He explained that he had wanted a successful demonstration on July 21, but sensed that extremists in Paris overestimated the willingness of the masses to act and in the provinces confusion reigned. Henri Labe supported Merrheim's account, adding that Georges Clemenceau had informed him of his determination to forcefully block any dangerous workers' protest.¹

The CGT's national Congress of Lyon met on September 15, two days after the metalworkers' congress. There, too, Merrheim was judged harshly. One syndicalist charged that workers should appraise the CGT's directors for their actions since the end of the war, especially on their performance in the July 21 strike.² Another delegate, Isidore Lorient, berated Merrheim and other CGT leaders for their refusal to take the slightest revolutionary action.³ Gaston Monmousseau of the Federation of Railroad Workers summed up the new minority's view of Merrheim's position. The Minimum Program and the CGT's participation in the Allied peace efforts, he said, constituted outright class collaboration. He also charged, correctly, that the CGT continued to identify with its wartime policy,

meaning that the confederation was increasingly integrating itself with government policies. He pointed out, too, that national defense and a League of Nations were never proper revolutionary syndicalist goals. For him the July 21 movement signaled a point of departure for the CGT, but the strike had failed because the confederation refused to seize the revolutionary moment. He estimated that the objective conditions were revolutionary and that the CGT should have brought this lesson to the masses. The Confederation, however, refused to do this because it had abdicated its role of leading the proletariat toward its historic goal, he concluded.⁴

If Monmousseau articulated the ideological perspective of the new minority, Pierre Monatte expressed the personal frustration and hostility so many felt toward Merrheim. 'Merrheim cannot make the revolutionary jump [...]' He praised Merrheim's role at Zimmerwald but detected a fundamental change in his personality since then. He explained the transformation in Merrheim by comparing the latter to Judas and by reading into Merrheim's character an interpretation Ernest Renan gave to Judas in his book *The Life of Christ*. Judas, according to Renan, was both an apostle and a treasurer. The treasurer in him, the administrator in his make-up, won over his apostolic nature and caused him to betray Christ. So, too, had the administrator in Merrheim's soul killed the apostle of revolution, resulting in Merrheim's treason to the workers' cause.⁵

Monatte was partly correct, for his former friend's trade unionism and administrative functions had swamped any revolutionary will he may have had as a young man. However, it is more correct to speak of Merrheim's gradual evolution into a nonrevolutionary, a development that long preceded 1914, than of some sudden betrayal after the war.

Merrheim defended himself and his position merely by repeating familiar formulas and interpreting events in a self-serving manner: he had opposed Léon Jouhaux in 1914, he said; the masses were too nationalistic in 1914 to react against the war; peace, not revolution, was needed during the war; the Conference of Clermont-Ferrand unified a badly split CGT; postwar society required rebuilding and not an antigovernment campaign; revolutionary action was simply inopportune in 1919.⁶

Merrheim and Communism

The new minority, however, did not fault Merrheim so much for failure to lead a successful revolution at that moment, but simply for his unwillingness to explore the revolutionary potential around him and for refusing to declare himself in favor of revolution and begin preparing actively for

one. Basically, after the June and July strikes, the issue boiled down to Merrheim's attitude towards Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and the Third International.

The Third International had had its first meeting in March 1919 and immediately began a campaign to attract adherents. In France, by May, the Comité pour la Reprise des Relations Internationales had become the Comité pour l'adhésion à la IIIe Internationale. Among its early members were Isidore Lorient, Louise Saumoneau, Pierre Monatte, Alfred Rosmer, Marcel Hasfeld, Raymond Péricat, and Gaston Monmousseau. Also, by that time Péricat had begun a new journal, *L'Internationale Communiste*, and *La Vie Ouvrière* had launched a new series as a revolutionary minority publication. Meanwhile, social agitation continued to charge the atmosphere. Strikes increased generally and the metalworkers strike of June was especially threatening. The CGT, too, was growing rapidly during this period: its membership went from 1,200,000 at the beginning of 1919 to 2,400,000 at the beginning of 1920. The government reported that the Federation of Metalworkers also increased its size to 234,000 during the same period (the federation had never exceeded 30,000 members before the war).⁷

The government tried to diffuse tensions by granting industrial workers the right to collective contracts (March 25), the eight-hour workday (April 23), and wage increases of 25 percent (after the June strikes). The CGT's revolutionary minority, however, would not be mollified, and after the Congress of Lyon it held its own minority conference. There it debated whether to remain within the CGT. The conference decided to bore from within the confederation for the moment, although it also formed the Comité de Syndicalisme Revolutionnaire (CSR). This new minority believed that supporting Lenin and joining the Third International was the meaningful revolutionary act of that moment.

Merrheim interpreted matters differently. Throughout 1919 he appeared not to have definitively made up his mind about the Russian Revolution. He believed it was an event still in flux, and consequently publicly expressed two attitudes toward it, one favorable the other cautious. Initially, he welcomed the revolution because it was made by workers and contained genuine democratic aims, especially worker control over the economy. After the war he voiced the hope that the revolution would survive and campaigned to have France cease its intervention in Russia. He was also sympathetic to the difficult situation the Bolsheviks faced with their faltering economy. In February 1919 he praised Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and Leon Trotsky for taking necessary measures to suppress anarchy and to employ middle class experts in the reconstruction of the economy; a strong hand

was necessary under these difficult circumstances, he wrote.⁸ In April he noted that the Bolsheviks had made a peace offer to the West in return for concessions, but the Western powers refused to negotiate.⁹

He became more negative toward the Russian Revolution as the Bolsheviks began to press the European left for support and revolutionary agitation at home. The Bolsheviks forced the issue when they attempted to enlist European workers and parties into the Third International. Before this development Merrheim could regard the revolution from afar and issue general statements of support or criticism. This was no longer possible, however, as the revolutionary minority in France (and elsewhere) increasingly linked itself with Lenin's aims.

Moreover, this turn of events occurred in a France beset with continued social unrest. During 1920, for instance, strikes did not abate and many had a revolutionary tone.¹⁰ The most significant of these strikes was that of the Federation of Railroad Workers. When in April 1920, the railroad workers called for a general strike, the CGT officially lent its support and also demanded the nationalization of the railroads. However, the confederation did not send out all its member federations at the same time, and thereby considerably weakened the impact of its assistance. For its part, the government acted decisively; it arrested the leaders of the Federation of Railway Workers and the directors of the Comité pour l'Adhésion à la IIIe Internationale (Monatte, Lorient, and Boris Souvarine) on charges of endangering state security. By the end of May, the CGT asked workers to resume their jobs; the railway workers could not hold out alone and they returned to work on May 29.

Outside of France, the International Conference of Trade Unions met in Moscow on July 15, immediately preceding the second congress of the Third International. Rosmer was there for the French and joined a committee that eventually became the Communist Trade Union International. When the Third International met the same month, it called upon the world proletariat to join and it published its requirements for membership, the famous 'Twenty-One Conditions'. These demanded a rejection of reformism and the Amsterdam International, and the submission of trade unions to a communist political party.

In October 1920 the CGT held a national congress at Orléans and there the debate focused around its attitude toward the Third International. The revolutionary minority had already decided at a conference just preceding this meeting to advocate the acceptance of Lenin's conditions and also to break with the Amsterdam International. François Mayoux expressed the minority viewpoint at Orléans when he stated that 'Revolution is not a sentiment; it is a struggle in the street; it is two armies opposing each other;

it is the army of the proletariat facing that of the bourgeoisie'.¹¹ Ludovic-Oscar Frossard was a Socialist who had recently returned from the second congress of the Third International. As a guest at the Congress of Orléans, he charged that joining the government or employers in an organization was class collaboration. He accused Merrheim of abandoning the Russian Revolution when it was being attacked by the White Russians and the Poles. The main issue was not whether the Soviet government had realized some ideal form conforming to some perfect plan, he said, but rather that the revolution had taken place and that it was a workers' revolution. Consequently the international proletariat should support it even if there were no possibility for revolution at home. Frossard also pointed out to Merrheim that dictatorship was not the aim of the Russian Revolution but only its beginning.¹²

Merrheim had begun to openly criticize Lenin before the Congress of Orléans had met. He did so in the syndicalist press and mainly in two journals, *L'Information Sociale et Ouvrière* and *L'Atelier*.¹³ Throughout the pages of these journals he expressed the view that Lenin and the Bolsheviks were subverting genuine working-class democracy and imposing the dictatorship of a small minority over the masses. At the Congress of Orléans he charged that Lenin wanted to extend his dictatorship over the world proletariat in order to continue his dictatorship in Russia.¹⁴ He also condemned Lenin for refusing to help Alexander Kerensky and for stifling the intellectual life of his country.¹⁵ Most important, however, was that Lenin's Twenty-One Conditions violated the fundamental spirit of revolutionary syndicalism.¹⁶ Merrheim, on the other hand, reaffirmed his abiding belief in the Charter of Amiens, especially concerning the autonomy and apolitical nature of the trade unions, the reorganization of the new society around the unions and the emphasis upon the dignity and worth of labor.¹⁷ He rightly identified the Twenty-One Conditions as a declaration of war upon classic revolutionary syndicalism; Lenin, after all, had always insisted upon the inadequacies of a trade union movement divorced from a political party. The threat to Merrheim, therefore, was not only from an inappropriate call for revolution in France, or the potential split in the CGT, but from a political doctrine, Bolshevism, which undermined his conception of the essence of revolutionary syndicalism.

Merrheim watched as the universe in which he operated was being torn asunder and collapsing. At the time, the CGT's revolutionary minority was steadily gaining adherents. At the Congress of Lyon in 1919, the majority report defending the CGT's actions since the war was approved by 1,393 votes to 538, with 42 abstentions. The formation of an Economic Council of Labor was passed by 1,633 votes to 324, with 43 abstentions.¹⁸ At

Orléans the following year a report concerning the CGT's performance during the July 21 strike received 1,485 votes of approval, 658 votes of disapproval, and 54 abstentions. On the issue of joining the Third International, there were 1,515 votes against and 522 votes for, with another 44 votes cast for a second minority resolution, and 83 abstentions.¹⁹ By the time that the Congress of Lille met in July 1921, the majority report received 1,556 votes against 1,348 votes, with 46 abstentions.²⁰

Other events, too, pointed to the revolutionary minority's increasing strength and its determination to break with the reformist direction of the CGT. It was encouraged by a decision taken in December 1920, by a revolutionary majority of the Socialist party meeting at the Congress of Tours to join the Third International. In the CGT those favoring Lenin's International gained a majority at the congresses of the Federation of Railway Workers and of the Federation of Building Trades Workers. Merrheim's position at the congress of his own federation in July 1921 won by a mere two votes. The CCN had already declared in February 1921 that any organization that supported the Third International placed itself outside the CGT. It repeated this admonition in September, following the Congress of Lille. The CSR, however, scheduled a minority congress to meet in December for the purpose of forming a revolutionary CGT. When that congress met between December 22 and 24, it provisionally formed a *Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire* (CGTU) and asked the CGT to hold an extraordinary congress by July 1922 to resolve the differences between minority and majority. On February 15, 1921, the CGT rejected this proposal and recognized the split as definitive. Between June 26, 1922 and July 1, 1922, the revolutionaries met at Saint-Etienne and there unequivocally formed the CGTU. They, too, consummated the division of the revolutionary syndicalist movement.

Merrheim's Collapse

These developments caused Merrheim to become violently anti-Bolshevik. He clarified his position on Lenin's party on several occasions, in articles such as the ones he wrote for *L'Atelier* and *L'Information Sociale et Ouvrière* and at congresses of the CGT. He brought together his ideas in two works that appeared in 1921: his pamphlet *Amsterdam ou Moscou? Le Syndicalisme en danger* and his preface for Max Hirsch's book, *Le Mirage du soviétisme*.²¹ In these two works, Merrheim added nothing new to what he had said before, however. They were merely a concise expression of his anti-Bolshevism. He concluded in the Hirsch book that 'In

the mysticism and adorations attached to Lenin, I find the same sentiments that twenty years ago swept away the French masses behind the panache [...] of General Boulanger'.²² In *Amsterdam ou Moscou?* he wrote that he was now crusading for 'the truth and independence of syndicalism. Because dictatorship exercised by a party, by a class or by a man represents despotism, authoritarianism, and slavery for everyone'.²³

Merrheim attacked all those who suggested moving beyond the Charter of Amiens, most notably Lenin. Yet Merrheim, too, had strayed from the original revolutionary spirit of the syndicalist movement, and even from the letter of some of its principles. What all his theories and interpretations really signified was that unconsciously he had long ceased being a revolutionary. As the world around him changed dramatically, he held on to an outmoded doctrine, unable to make the revolutionary jump and equally unable to admit to the subtle transformation of his revolutionary ideas. Merrheim's words and deeds were providing the intellectual justification for a revolutionary syndicalist movement that, in practice, had become democratic and integrated into the capitalist state. Russian Bolshevism challenged French syndicalists to become authentically revolutionary. That challenge split the CGT and affected Merrheim's federation as well. In 1918, 32 percent of the metalworkers' locals belonging to the federation sided with the new minority. That figure grew to 42 percent by the CGT's Congress of Lyon and to almost 54 percent by the Congress of Lille.²⁴ By 1921, the Federation of Metalworkers had divided into two as had the CGT. Merrheim held the Bolsheviks responsible and for three years, from 1920 to 1923, he turned out a stream of violent and vicious anti-Bolshevik tirades in *L'Atelier*. He seemed almost completely consumed now by this anti-communist crusade. Nothing Merrheim's previous writings prepares us for the meanness and vehemence of his pen. Then suddenly, in late June 1923, the articles stopped. The editor of *L'Atelier* provided no explanation. Merrheim's name simply disappeared from this and all other syndicalist journals. Nothing was ever heard from him in public again.

The reason for this abrupt cessation and subsequent silence was forthcoming at the October 1923 congress of Merrheim's federation. There, in delicate, respectful, and cautious terms, a report revealed that Merrheim had suffered a nervous breakdown and had been committed to a mental asylum. The official announcement stated that the strains of his public life and the conflicts he had to endure especially during these these last years were too heavy for him to support and that he had suddenly been stricken with madness.²⁵ His supporters then drew a veil of silence over any details concerning the clinical nature of his illness or the location of the asylum. Thus they assured that his private life would remain as guarded from

public scrutiny as he had always preferred. His friends also wished to protect his reputation from being tarnished because of the stigma attached to mental illness. The next we hear of Merrheim was in a report presented to the 1927 congress of the Federation of Metalworkers. It announced simply that Merrheim had died on October 23, 1925, never having regained his sanity.²⁶

The final word concerning Merrheim appropriately belongs to two of his contemporaries. In 1918, Marie Guillot, a member of the Federation of Teachers, writing to Pierre Monatte, provided a short yet remarkably accurate explanation of Merrheim's character and actions. According to Guillot, Merrheim was

extremely moderate, even fearful of anything that is not in the domain of 'economic facts.' To hold on to his prewar position, he has had to undergo great torment. And when circumstances become more extremist, he shall emerge in the right-center – that is his nature. He has the temperament of a good worker constantly thinking about the organization of work. He does not have the temperament of a revolutionary because he calculates too much, always weighing the pros and cons.²⁷

Pierre Monatte, the man who had first met Merrheim when the latter had arrived in Paris in 1904, broke with his friend over the latter's reformism after the war. Although Monatte had accused Merrheim of abandoning his revolutionary ideas and friends in the minority, he never doubted Merrheim's sincerity or honesty. Noting in 1925 that he and Merrheim had become enemies, Monatte could also write that 'never have I forgotten the man that he was, nor that he has given his all to the movement; I shall never hate him [...]. I am very sure that his new friends, who have found only a few cold words to throw over his tomb, have not understood and loved him as we have loved and understood him'.²⁸

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES

APP	Archives de la Préfecture de Police, Paris
AN	Archives Nationales, Paris
BS	<i>La Bataille Syndicaliste</i>
CGT	Confédération Générale du Travail
FNOM	Fédération Nationale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de France (1883-1889)
FOM	Fédération des Ouvriers des Métaux et Similaires de France (from 1909 to 1927)
FOM, PV	Procès-verbal de la Commission Exécutive [de la Fédération des Ouvriers des Métaux]
IFHS	Institut Français d'Histoire Sociale, Paris
IRM	Institut Français de Recherche Marxiste, Paris [formerly the Institut Maurice Thorez]
OM	<i>L'Ouvrier Métallurgiste</i>
UFOM	Union Fédérale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de France (1889-1907)
UM	<i>L'Union des Métaux</i>
VP	<i>La Voix du Peuple</i>

Official proceedings of the labor congresses (mostly of the Confédération Générale du Travail and the Fédération des Métaux) are cited in the form of 'CGT, *XXe Congrès national corporatif*', or 'FOM, *2e Congrès national*', etc., followed, unless otherwise indicated, by the city and the date of the congress in parenthesis.

NOTES

Chapter 1

1. Acte de naissance d'Alphonse Merrheim, Ville de La Madeleine (Nord), France, no. 77, May 8, 1871.
2. Pierre Brizon, 'Merrheim', in *La Vague*, no. 2, January 12, 1918, p. 1. The portrait of Merrheim in this work is very intimate and the source of Brizon's information could only have been Merrheim.
3. No information exists concerning Merrheim's school years except for a few references he made as an adult. He noted in 1912, for instance, that his school teacher taught republican values, but he wrote this at a time when he was defending himself against charges by employers that workers were antipatriotic. While never denying this accusation, he pointed out that capitalists were more concerned with international finance than with nationalism; see Alphonse Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 590, January 14-21, 1912, p. 2. He also wrote that he had received a religious education but that he had left school because he did not want to study 'chez les frères'. There was certainly no trace of religious practice in his adult life, however. See Brizon, 'Merrheim'.
4. Brizon, *ibid.*
5. Alphonse Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 598, March 10-17, 1912, pp. 2-3.
6. Claude Willard, *Les Guesdistes. Le Mouvement socialiste en France, (1893-1905)* (Paris, 1965), pp.214-215.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 385-386.
9. Cited by Georges LeFranc, *Histoire du mouvement syndical sous la Troisième République* (Paris, 1967), p. 41.
10. Jacques Julliard, 'Théorie syndicaliste révolutionnaire et pratique gréviste', in *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 65, October- December 1968, pp. 55-69.
11. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, p. 235.
12. Alphonse Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 310, September 16-23, 1906, p. 2.
13. Alphonse Merrheim, CGT, *XVe Congrès national corporatif* (Amiens, 1906), pp. 152-155.
14. Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 598, March 10-17, 1912, pp. 2-3.
15. Alphonse Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 602, April 7-14, 1912, pp. 2-3.
16. Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 598, March 10-17, 1912, pp. 2-3.
17. There is some confusion concerning the actual year in which Merrheim founded this union. Edouard Dolléans wrote that Merrheim had organized a coppersmiths' union in Roubaix in 1891; *Alphonse Merrheim*, (Paris, 1939), p. 1. Actually, Merrheim's first attempt to organize a union in 1891 was a failure because of opposition from the POF. In his own recollections of these years, Merrheim wrote in 1912, 'I had established at that time – 1893 – the union of Chaudronniers sur cuivre de Roubaix-Tourcoing, of which I remained secretary until I entered the Federation of Metalworkers'. See Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 598, March 10-17, 1912, pp. 2-3. Victor Daline, who has worked extensively with the private correspondence of Merrheim, cites a quotation found outside of the Merrheim Archives, but not identified, in which Merrheim writes, 'I have reestablished [the union] in 1892, and I was its secretary until 24 June 1904, the date of my becoming secretary of the federation of metallurgy [sic], today the federation of metalworkers [sic]'. See Daline, 'Alphonse Merrheim et sa "correspondance confidentielle"' (Moscow, 1965; French edition, in *Hommes et idées*, pp. 232-342, translated by Robert Rodov, Moscow, 1983), p. 236. In a written portrait of Merrheim, undoubtedly done with the latter's cooperation, Brizon, 'Merrheim', confirms the 1893 date, and I am inclined to accept this year as correct.
18. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 50, October 1898, p. 2.

19. Two reports exist in the Police Archives (APP, B/A 1602, note of July 20, 1908, and note of December 14, 1908, which make very clear how Guesdists felt about Merrheim. One report (July 20, 1908) noted how Merrheim 'cannot go to the Nord (his home department) because of the hate he inspires among the Guesdists'. The second report (December 14, 1908) stated that 'Merrheim of Metallurgy never accepts any delegations from the Nord under the pretext that his revolutionary opinions have alienated his former working class comrades. In fact, it appears (some formal witnesses have proposed) that Merrheim had a very antiunionist attitude at Roubaix. He was the foreman of an establishment, where he remained for thirteen years, and it seems he sordidly submitted to all the exactions of his employer. He does not dare, therefore, go to the Nord for fear of seeing himself being reproached with these facts at a rostrum'. These statements reflect the animosity the Guesdists had developed for Merrheim by 1908 because he had broken with them and joined their rivals, the revolutionary syndicalists. The charges concerning his job as a foreman are false and in this instance the Guesdists are confusing Merrheim with his father, who was the foreman of a brassworkers' factory.

20. Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 50, October 1898, p. 2.

21. For information on Bourchet, see Jean Maitron, ed., *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français*, pt. 3, vol. XI (Paris, 1973), p. 18.

22. Office du Travail, *Les Associations professionnelles ouvrières* (Paris, 1902), vol. III, pp. 163-164.

23. *Le Cuivre*, no. 3, December 1898, p. 2.

24. *Ibid.*, no. 4, January 1899, p. 2. This issue of *Le Cuivre* also contains a report of the congress of the federation held in 1895.

25. This propaganda campaign may be followed in the issues of *Le Cuivre* of the summer and fall of 1898. This newspaper is virtually the only source of information on Merrheim in these years.

26. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 49, September 1898, p. 1.

27. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 77, January 1901, p. 2.

28. FNOM, 'Compte rendu du 2e Congrès national de la Métallurgie (Paris, November 23-27, 1892)', in *Bulletin Officiel de la Fédération Nationale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de France*, no. 19, 1892, p. 5.

29. See, for example, FNOM, *Rapport sur le Congrès national de la Métallurgie* (Paris, 1899), p. 3, where it was reported that the Federation changed its structure to accommodate autonomous sections within its framework.

30. 'Procès-verbal de la réunion de la Commission Interfédérale (May 17, 1900)', in *Le Cuivre*, no. 70, June 1900, p. 1.

31. 'Comité d'Entente des Fédérations du Cuivre, des Mécaniciens, et des Mouleurs', in *ibid.*, p. 1.

32. UFOM, *9e Congrès national* (Paris, 1900), p. 27 and p. 54.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 54. For a study of the Comité des Forges, see Michael J. Rust, 'Business and Politics in the Third Republic. The Comité des Forges and the French Steel Industry, 1896-1914', Ph. D dissertation, Princeton University, 1973.

34. UFOM, *10e Congrès national* (Saint-Etienne, 1901), pp. 15-18. For source of quotation, see p. 146.

35. For information on the Congress of the Cuivre, see the following: 'Conseil Fédéral [Procès-verbal de la] Réunion du Conseil Fédéral du 30 mai 1900', in *Le Cuivre*, no. 70, June 1900, p. 2; Albert Bourchet, 'Le Congrès du Cuivre - Demande de Subvention,' in *ibid.*, p. 4; 'Appel du Congrès', in *ibid.*, no. 71, July 1900, p. 1; 'Conseil fédéral - Paris - Procès-verbal de l'Assemblée générale du 28 juillet 1900', in *ibid.*, no. 72, August 1900, p. 2; 'Le Congrès du Cuivre: Réglementation de l'ordre du jour,' in *ibid.*, no. 73, September 1900, p. 2.

36. Edouard Dumas, 'L'Union Fédérale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, November 1-15, 1905, no. 166-167, pp. 361-363.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 363-364.

38. 'Conseil Fédéral, Séance du 15 décembre (1902)', in *Le Cuivre*, no. 101, January 1903, p. 4.

39. 'Paris - Chambre Syndicale Ouvrière des tourneurs-robinetiers - Procès-verbal de l'Assemblée Générale du 24 janvier 1903', in *ibid.*, no. 102, February 1903, p. 4; 'Conseil Fédéral, Séance du 26 février', in *ibid.*, no. 103, March 1903, p. 4. It was the February 26 meeting of the Federal Council of the Federation of Copperworkers that decided to name 'a study commission charged to work out common statuts'. See also Albert Bourchet, 'Le Projet d'union', in *ibid.*, no. 102, February 1903, pp. 1-2. This last article indicates that Bourchet

worked actively to bring about unity between his federation and the Federation of Metalworkers. To make this easier on his membership, he emphasized that the Federation of Copperworkers would maintain its autonomy within any new organization.

40. Albert Bourchet, 'Vers l'unité', in *ibid.*, no. 105, April 1903, p. 1.
41. Alphonse Merrheim, in *ibid.*, no. 83, July 1901, pp. 3-4.
42. Michel Collinet, *L'Ouvrier français. L'Esprit du syndicalisme* (Paris, 1951), pp. 23-29.
43. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 83, July 1901, pp. 3-4.
44. 'Congrès du Cuivre [September 1902]', in *ibid.*, no. 98, October 1902, pp. 3-4.
45. Alphonse Merrheim, in *ibid.*, no. 105, April 1903, p. 2; his emphasis.
46. Alphonse Merrheim, in *OM*, no. 138, June 1, 1903, p. 5.
47. Alphonse Merrheim, in *ibid.*, no. 140, August 1, 1903, p. 2.
48. UFOM, *XIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1903); see p. 31 for the official announcement.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 27; on p. 26 of this report we read that the Syndicat des Chaudronniers sur Cuivre from Roubaix, Merrheim's union, had joined the new federation. Merrheim took no part in the debates, however.
50. *OM*, no. 150, June 1, 1904, p. 3 and p. 4; Bourchet's formal letter of resignation and the announcement of Merrheim's election is in UFOM, *XIIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1905), pp. 63-64.
51. Merrheim, in *OM*, no. 150, June 1, 1904, p. 3.
52. Alphonse Merrheim, in *ibid.*, no. 151, July 1, 1904, p. 1.
53. AN, F7, 13574, note of Paris, July 8, 1915.
54. This information comes from a fascinating biographical sketch of Merrheim found in APP, B/A 1688, note of March 1907 (dossier no. 1, 'Au sujet de la Confédération Générale du Travail').
55. Pierre Monatte, 'Alphonse Merrheim', in *La Révolution Prolétarienne*, no. 11, November 1925, p. 11.
56. Edouard Dolléans, *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier*, vol. II (Paris, 1939; reprint ed., Paris, 1957), pp. 168-169.
57. See Justinien Raymond, 'Un Tragique Episode du mouvement ouvrier à Cluses (Haute-Savoie) en 1904', in *Mélanges d'histoire sociale offerts à Jean Maitron* (Paris, 1976), pp. 197-210.
58. AN, F7, 13771, 'Le Mouvement syndical dans la Métallurgie (Historique)', n.d.
59. Alphonse Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 208, October 9-16, 1904, p. 1, and *VP*, no. 198, July 31-August 7, 1904, pp. 1-2.
60. See, for example, Merrheim's articles in *VP* from August to December 1904, as well as Alphonse Merrheim in *OM*, no. 158, January 1, 1905, p. 1.

Chapter 2

1. A recent example of this usage is Louis Köll's excellent study of one mining town in this region, Auboué, in *Auboué en Lorraine du fer. Du Village rural à la cité minière* (Paris, 1981).
2. Serge Bonnet and Roger Humbert, *La Ligne rouge des hauts fourneaux* (Paris, 1981), p. 14.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
4. For a discussion of this strike, see *ibid.*, pp. 45-53.
5. For this list, see Alphonse Merrheim, 'Le Mouvement ouvrier dans le bassin de Longwy', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, nos. 168-169, December 1-15 1905, p. 434; for the entire study by Merrheim of this strike, see pp. 425-482; this article is still the most complete study of this strike.
6. Bonnet and Humbert, *La Ligne rouge*, p. 55.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-47.
8. Depending on the source, the figures given range from 1,000 to 4,000 marchers; see Bonnet and Humbert, *ibid.*, pp. 48-53.
9. For what follows, see Bonnet and Humbert, *ibid.*, pp. 48-53.
10. For information on Varède, see Jean Maitron, ed., *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français*, pt. 3, vol. XV (Paris, 1977), p. 287.
11. See Merrheim, 'Le Mouvement ouvrier', pp. 291-309.
12. Bonnet and Humbert, *La Ligne rouge*, p. 299.
13. Merrheim, 'Le Mouvement ouvrier', pp. 425-482.
14. Bonnet and Humbert, *La Ligne rouge*, pp. 54-56.

15. Köll, *Auboué*, pp. 121-161.
16. Bonnet and Humbert, *La Ligne rouge*, pp. 54-65.
17. An excellent discussion of this issue is in Claude Precheur, *La Lorraine sidérurgique* (Paris, 1959), pp. 480-495.
18. See the Statistiques générale de la France, *Résultats statistiques du recensement de la population*, 1906, p.100 and p. 159.
19. The definitive study of Italians in this area is Serge Bonnet, Charles Santini, Hubert Barthélémy, 'Les Italiens dans l'arrondissement de Briey', in *Annales de l'Est*, 1962, pp. 3-92.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-22.
21. It is impossible to determine the number of Italians in the department working in the metals industry. There are some statistics, however, concerning the number of Italians working in mines. In 1912, the arrondissement of Briey had 7,558 Italian miners out of a total of 12,284 miners. In Longwy there were 1,192 Italians among the 1,951 miners in the city. See M.F. Leprince-Rinquet, *Rapport sur l'industrie minière en Meurthe-et-Moselle pendant l'année 1912* (Nancy, 1912), p. 13; cited by Bonnet, Santini, Barthélémy, 'Les Italiens', p. 22.
22. Köll, *Auboué*, p. 87.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92 and pp. 102-120.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
26. Bonnet and Humbert, *La Ligne rouge*, p. 192.
27. *Le Reveil de l'arrondissement de Briey*, April 30, 1905, p. 4.
28. Souvarine, 'La Solidarité ouvrière en Italie', in *La Vie sociale de Meurthe-et-Moselle*, October 26, 1907, p. 1.
29. Alphonse Merrheim, *Le Réveil de l'arrondissement de Briey*, October 1, 1905, p. 2.
30. Merrheim, 'Le Mouvement ouvrier', pp. 432-433.
31. Alphonse Merrheim, in *La Vie Sociale de l'arrondissement de Briey*, no. 28, June 9, 1906, p. 4, and in *La Vie Sociale de Meurthe-et-Moselle*, no. 103, November 9, 1907, p. 1.
32. For a few examples of this theme, see Alphonse Merrheim in *Le Réveil [...] Briey*, May 14, 1905, p. 4; *ibid.*, July 23, 1905; and VP, July 16, 1905.
33. UFOM, *XIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1905), p. 264, p. 273, pp. 280-281, and *passim*.
34. UFOM, *XIIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1907), pp. 270-305 and pp. 368-397.
35. See, for example, The Fifth International Metalworkers' Congress (Brussels, 1907), *Official Report*, pp. 52-53.
36. See an excellent unpublished report on this subject by Etienne Kagan, 'L'Attitude des syndicats ouvriers à l'égard de l'immigration en Lorraine (1900-1939)', presented to the Table Ronde C.N.R.S., Montpellier, October 12-14, 1972, 19 pp.
37. Bonnet and Humbert, *La Ligne rouge*, pp. 198-213. See also Gary S. Cross, *Immigrant Workers in Industrial France. The Making of a New Working Class* (Philadelphia, 1983). This last book appeared after the completion of this chapter; it confirms the findings of this chapter.
38. AN, F7, 13608, report of Nancy, August 5, 1913.
39. Victor Daline, 'Alphonse Merrheim et sa 'correspondance confidentielle'', (Moscow, 1965; French edition, in *Hommes et idées*, pp. 232-342, translated by Robert Rodov, Moscow, 1983), p. 240.

Chapter 3

1. Excellent introductions to the May Day movement and the history of the general strike in France are: Maurice Dommanget, *Histoire du premier mai* (Paris, 1953), and Robert Brécy, *La Grève générale en France* (Paris, 1969); see also Peter Stearns, 'Against the Strike Threat. Employers' Policy Towards Labor Agitation in France, 1900-1914', in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 40, no. 4, December 1968, pp. 474-500.
2. CGT, *XIVe Congrès national corporatif* (Bourges, 1904), pp. 205-207 (for the committee's proposal); pp. 204-220 (for the full debate); pp. 219-220 (for the results of the voting).
3. AN, F7, 13267, note M/1919 of Paris, December 11, 1905.
4. Alphonse Merrheim, in *OM*, no. 154, October 1, 1904, p. 1.
5. VP, no. 219, December 25-January 1, 1905, p. 2. Merrheim's trip to the Centre prompted a police agent to write that Merrheim was a 'good orator, prudent in word and deed, but

all the more dangerous'. See AN, F7, 13267, note M/1919 of Paris, December 11, 1905.

6. See 'Congrès régional des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de la Région du Nord, tenu à Lille, le 19 Mars, 1905, Compte rendu', in *OM*, no. 160, March 1, 1905, p. 1.

7. The manifesto is in *OM*, no. 161, April 1, 1905, p. 1.

8. UFOM, *XIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1905), pp. 288-295 (report of the Commission on the Eight-Hour Workday), pp. 296-297 (the resolution calling for the eight-hour workday and a propaganda campaign for May 1, 1906).

9. For instance, on December 25, 1905, a typical day for Merrheim, he conducted a two-hour meeting at Vichy and immediately went to the next city for another. See 'Les Meetings des huit heures', in *VP*, no. 273, January 7-14, 1906, p. 3; also see no. 272, January 1-7, 1906, p. 3.

10. AN, F7, 12890, note 4,656 of January 19, 1906.

11. CGT, *Conférence des Fédérations. Journées des 5 et 6 Avril 1906* (Brochure 8, 40 pp., n.d., n.p.).

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28; p. 31.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-9.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40. See also 'Résolutions de la Conférence des Fédérations', in *VP*, no. 287, April 15-21, 1906, p. 1.

19. *Le Temps*, April 25, 1906, p. 2, and AN, F7, 13267, April 24, 1906, M/741.

20. The first formal study of the strike was by Alphonse Merrheim, 'Un Grand Conflit social. La Grève d'Hennebont', pt. I, in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 180, November 1906, pp. 194-218; pt. II, no. 181, December 1906, pp. 347-379. Hereafter cited as 'Un Grand Conflit social', pt. I and pt. II.

21. 'Un Grand Conflit social', pt. I, pp. 197-198.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 202-207.

23. AN, F7, 12765, note of Hennebont, December 11, 1905 (dossier 'Morbihan').

24. AN, F7, 12786, note of April 4, 1906 (dossier 'Lorient').

25. *Ibid.*, note of April 10, 1906.

26. This information is contained in a letter, dated April 9, 1906, Giband sent to the commissioner of police of Hennebont. Since Giband feared trouble, he requested forces to maintain public order. The letter is in AN, F7, 12786, note of April 11, 1906 (dossier 'préfet').

27. For just a few examples of leaders going back and forth between Lorient and Hennebont before the strike, see AN, F7, 12786, notes of April 17, 1906, April 24, 1906, and especially April 18, 1906 (dossier 'Lorient'). The last report deals with a Lorient meeting at which a delegate of the CGT, Paul Pommier, spoke. He had toured the area and reported on Hennebont. The workers there, he said, could not strike until they received a final response to their demands from the company. A local leader reported, however, that the Hennebont workers had already voted to support the Lorient workers and had formed an entente with them for that purpose.

28. AN, F7, 12786, note of Hennebont, April 15, 1906.

29. *Ibid.*, also note no. 27.

30. AN, F7, 12786, note of Lorient, April 17, 1906. Also see AN, F7, 12886, note of Lorient, April 22, 1906. The latter report states that Madame Jacoby, a CGT delegate, and Crainac, an activist, have left Lorient for Hennebont to confer with the workers of the iron-works. The report predicts that the Hennebont workers will strike on April 23 at 6 a.m. There exists another, more precise report on this meeting: see AN, F7, 12786, note of April 22, 1906 (préfet à intérieur cabinet, Paris; dossier 'préfet'). This note indicated that Jacoby addressed a meeting of about 600 workers where demands were read. Jacoby, also persuaded the women of Hennebont to take part in the strike. Then Crainac followed her on the podium and called for a general strike. The workers, however, decided to wait until the following day, April 23, to receive Giband's final answer. The report concluded that a strike appeared imminent.

31. AN, F7, 12786, note of April 22, 1906 (dossier 'préfet'). There are two reports in this dossier, with the same date, that deal with this meeting.

32. There are several reports that concern this meeting, some more detailed than others. See, for example, *ibid.*, note of April 23, 1906 (from 'préfet à Commerce et Intérieur'), and note of Hennebont, April 23, 1906. The most satisfactory and detailed reports, however, are those of Vannes, April 26, 1906. The general route reports followed was from the commissioner

of police to the prefect of Morbihan, who had his headquarters in Vannes, and from the prefect to Paris. The prefect also sent his own usually detailed reports to the capital.

33. Although the strike broke out before May 1, it was part of the CGT's May Day eight-hour workday movement. See UFOM, *XIIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1907), pp. 22-23.

34. AN, F7, 12786, note of Vannes, April 28, 1906.

35. For Sélaquet's first meetings see AN, F7, 12786, note of Vannes, April 30, 1906 (two reports with the same date); note of Hennebont, April 30, 1906, and note of Hennebont, May 1, 1906.

36. *Ibid.*, note of Hennebont, May 2, 1906.

37. *Ibid.*, note of Hennebont, May 3, 1906.

38. For Sélaquet's participation in the strike, see *ibid.*, note of Hennebont, May 4, 1906. To follow these events, also see *ibid.* This carton is a mine of information; it contains daily police reports on the strike.

39. See *ibid.*, notes of Hennebont, May 17, 1906 and May 26, 1906. Merrheim did not arrive on time and the next few meetings were taken over by others. See *ibid.*, note of Hennebont, June 1, 1906. For his first speech on June 2, see *Le Nouvelliste du Morbihan*, June 7, 1906.

40. For these accusations, see Alphonse Merrheim, in OM, no. 176, July 1, 1906, p. 1. See also *ibid.*, no. 177, August 1, 1906, p. 3 and Alphonse Merrheim, in VP, no. 301, July 15-22, 1906, p. 2.

41. AN, F7, 12786, note of Lorient, April 27, 1906.

42. For the report and information on Kerbastard, see *ibid.*, note of Lorient, April 27, 1906. For Merrheim's assessment, see Alphonse Merrheim, in OM, no. 177, August 1, 1906, p. 2. See also Alphonse Merrheim, in VP, no. 303, July 29-August 5, 1906, p. 2.

43. The process by which the company instituted this tactic was drawn out. The idea to open the factory to those who wished to return was first mentioned in early June. During the rest of the month Giband issued letters and manifestoes, the union responded, and several strikers began returning to work. For much of this information, which I have pieced together, see the following: AN, F7, 12786, note of Lorient, June 6, 1906; and note of Hennebont, July 13, 1906; Merrheim, in VP, no. 301, July 15-22, 1906, p. 2; AN, F7, 12786, note of June 9, 1906; and note of Hennebont, June 12, 1906.

44. See AN, F7, 12786, note of Hennebont, June 15, 1906.

45. The reader's attention is called to AN, F7, 12786, which contains daily reports on the situation issued by the prefect of Morbihan to his superiors in Paris. Follow the reports from July 15 on for the count of workers returning to their jobs.

46. Homes of some strike breakers were set on fire. Also, in one instance the wife of one man on the job was attacked by the wives of two strikers. We read, too, that a strike breaker's child was hit by strikers. See, for example, AN, F7, 12786, note of Vannes, July 20, 1906; note of Hennebont, July 20, 1906; note of Hennebont, July 20, 1906; note of Hennebont, August 6, 1906; note of Hennebont, August 7, 1906; and note of Hennebont, August 8, 1906.

47. AN, F7, 12786, note of Vannes, June 24, 1906; note of Lorient, July 6, 1906; note of Vannes, July 9, 1906; note of Hennebont, July 10, 1906; and the newspaper *Action* for July 13, 1906. The suspension was lifted on August 10, when the strike was almost over.

48. UFOM, *XIIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1907), pp. 226-227.

49. Details of this meeting, which is covered better than most, are in AN, F7, 12786, note of Hennebont, June 5, 1906 (from 'le commissaire de police d'Hennebont au préfet de Morbihan'). This report also notes that Merrheim answered a charge that he received a large monthly wage, 250 francs, while directing the strike. Merrheim stated that he would have earned 300 francs per month if he had remained a practicing copperworker. He continued, somewhat apologetically, that he had no children, that his wife earned 3 francs a day, and that he paid all his debts. He could not deny receiving high wages while others were on strike, however. His justification for this was that the overall interests of syndicalism required that the leaders get paid and that the strikers, too, would ultimately benefit.

50. Commenting on Merrheim's participation in the strike of Hennebont, a police agent wrote of Merrheim that 'His language is rather violent; and he calls himself a partisan of direct action'. See APP, B/A 1688, note of March 1907 (dossier no. 1, 'Au sujet de la Confédération Générale du Travail').

51. AN, F7, 12786, note of Hennebont, June 2, 1906 (from 'le commissaire de police d'Hennebont au préfet de Morbihan à Vannes'); and *ibid.*, note of Hennebont, June 2, 1906 (from 'Le Préfet de Morbihan à L'Intérieur, Cabinet et Sûreté, Paris').

52. AN, F7, 12786, note of Hennebont, June 2, 1906.

53. When Merrheim first arrived in Hennebont, he indicated that since the strikers had modified their demands, the company would probably accept them within two weeks. See note no. 51.

54. AN, F7, 13771 ('le Mouvement syndicale dans la métallurgie [historique]', n.d.).

55. AN, F7, 12786, note of Hennebont, June 10, 1906. This report also offered an explanation for this violence. 'One attributes his [Merrheim's] violent language to his anger: he has alluded to his arrest several times'. The report explained that Merrheim was especially violent because he hoped for amnesty, a statement that makes little logical sense, and does not take into consideration the effect he would have produced on his audience, something which he certainly considered. The report was correct, on the other hand, regarding his concern for his possible arrest.

56. *Ibid.*, note of Hennebont, June 19, 1906.

57. There is in the Police Archives a biographical sketch of Merrheim up to 1907. Concerning his activities in Hennebont, it reads: 'He [Merrheim] is considered in the Bourse du Travail and in workers' organizations as an activist syndicalist and he is often picked to conduct conferences in the provinces. Thus, last year in April, he went to Denain for several meetings. A little later, in June, he went every fifteen days among the Hennebont strikers to exhort them to continue the strike'. APP, B/A 1686, March 1907 (dossier no. 1, 'Au Sujet de la Confédération Générale du Travail').

58. Merrheim's only comment on the arrest was to excuse himself for being late in Hennebont because, he said, the government had accused him of being mixed up in a plot and he could not leave Paris on time. See AN, F7, 12786, note of Hennebont, June 2, 1906.

59. *Ibid.*, note of Vannes, June 22, 1906.

60. AN, F7, 13772, note of Paris, June 28, 1906, M/1268.

61. This information is from the secret report of 'A Correspondant', in AN, F7, 12786, June 14, 1906.

62. Not only would Merrheim have to negotiate with capitalists and government officials to end the strike, but syndicalists reluctantly watched socialists assist in this matter. See *ibid.*, note of July 2, 1906; note of August 9, 1906; and note of August 10, 1906. The last two reports state that because a socialist deputy intervened, the minister of war granted a reprieve of twenty eight days to all strikers being called for military duty. The minister acknowledged that the strike had caused considerable hardship for the workers.

63. 'Un Grand Conflit social', pt. II, p. 355.

64. Several sources cover this meeting. See *L'Humanité*, no. 808, July 4, 1906, p. 2, and no. 809, July 5, 1906, p. 2; AN, F7, 12786, July 5, 1906; 'Un Grand Conflit social', pt. II, pp. 359-361; and especially *Le Nouvelliste du Morbihan*, July 8, 1906, which is more detailed than the other sources.

65. See *Le Nouvelliste du Morbihan*, July 8, 1906, and 'Un Grand Conflit social', pt. II, pp. 360-361. See also *L'Humanité*, no. 809, July 5, 1906, p. 2.

66. Merrheim never mentioned his meeting with Clemenceau in his official study of the Hennebont strike. Yet in his private correspondence he notes that Clemenceau sought him out through the offices of his chef de cabinet, Emile Buré. Clemenceau wanted to know what he could do to calm the situation in Hennebont. Merrheim replied that that was not his business and that the strike would expand. For this information see Victor Daline, Alphonse Merrheim et sa 'correspondance confidentielle' (Moscow, 1965; French edition, in *Hommes et idées*, pp. 232-342, translated by Robert Rodov, Moscow, 1983), p. 243. See also AN, F7, 12786, telegram of July 24, 1906, and telegram of July 25, 1906; note of Hennebont, July 29, 1906, and note of Hennebont, July 31, 1906; and 'Un Grand Conflit social', pt. II, p. 367.

67. Merrheim's account in 'Un Grand Conflit social', pt. II, pp. 367-373, agrees in all its essentials with police reports being filed during the events. Moreover, Merrheim admitted that his call for an end to the strike was unpopular with many workers.

68. For reprint of this letter, dated August 1, 1906, see Alphonse Merrheim, 'A Hennebont', in VP, no. 304, August 5-12, 1906, p. 2, and 'Un Grand Conflit social', pt. II, p. 368.

69. AN, F7, 12786, note of Hennebont, August 2, 1906; note of Hennebont, August 3, 1906; note of Hennebont, August 4, 1906; also note of Hennebont, August 5, 1906.

70. *Ibid.*, note of Hennebont, August 5, 1906 (two reports with the same date); AN, F7, 13772, note of August 5 [1906] (dossier 'Union Fédérale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes, 1906', pp. 12-26); see also AN, F7, 13772, note of August 6 [1906] dossier 'Union Fédérale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes, 1906', pp. 12-25).

71. AN, F7, 12786, note of Hennebont, August 4, 1906.

72. 'Un Grand Conflit social', pt. II, pp. 368-369, and *L'Humanité*, August 9, 1906, p. 1.

73. For Merrheim's suggestion, see AN, F7, 12786, note of Hennebont, August 6, 1906. Full details of the meeting at which these terms were agreed upon are in *ibid.*, note of Hennebont, August 9, 1906. A full list of the terms of the settlement is provided by Merrheim, 'Un Grand Conflit social', pt. II, pp. 369-370.
74. For a copy of this poster, entitled 'Avis aux ouvriers des forges d'Hennebont', see AN, F7, 12786 (n.d., in the dossier 'du préfet de Morbihan au ministre de l'intérieur', dated August 12, 1906). For a statement of his position, see *ibid.*, note of Hennebont, August 10, 1906.
75. *Ibid.*, see the meetings of August 10 and 11, 1906.
76. *Ibid.*, note of Hennebont, August 12, 1906; and 'Un Grand Conflit social', II, pp. 371-373.
77. AN, F7, 12786, note of August 12, 1906.
78. 'Un Grand Conflit social', pt. II, p. 372.
79. This speech is in AN, F7, 12786, note of Hennebont, August 12, 1906.
80. *Ibid.*
81. 'Un Grand Conflit social', pt. II, pp. 377-378. For the overall conclusions, see pp. 375-379; Merrheim's emphasis.
82. Louis Levine, *The Labor Movement in France* (New York, 1914), p. 169, and 'Un Grand Conflit social', pt. II, pp. 375-379.
83. UFOM, *XIIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1907), pp. 162-164.
84. Edouard Dolléans, *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier*, (Paris, 1939; reprint ed., Paris, 1957), vol. II, p. 171; also Edouard Dolléans, *Alphonse Merrheim* (Paris, 1939), pp. 13-14. Jean Montreuil (Georges Lefranc) has the same information in his *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier en France, des origines à nos jours* (Paris, 1946), p. 300.
85. Office du Travail, *Statistiques des grèves*, 1906, pp. 781-783.

Chapter 4

1. CGT, *XVe Congrès national corporatif* (Amiens, 1906), p. 154.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.
3. See Jacques Julliard, *Clemenceau, Briseur des grèves. L'Affaire de Draveil-Villeneuve-Saint-Georges (1908)* (Paris, 1965), p. 23. See also *ibid.*, *passim*, for a narrative reconstruction of the events of the strike and its aftermath.
4. 'Les Policiers dans les Syndicats', in *VP*, no. 294, May 27- June 3, 1906, p. 1.
5. 'Confédération Générale du Travail – Section des Fédérations- Séance du 23 décembre 1907', in *VP*, no. 400, May 31-June 7, 1908, p. 4.
6. Alphonse Merrheim, 'La Crise syndicaliste', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 215-216, November-December 1909, pp. 291-299.
7. APP, B/A 1602, file no. 2000-1773, note of Paris, June 6, 1908.
8. *Ibid.*, note of Paris, June 11, 1908.
9. AN, F7, 13773, note of Paris, December 27, 1911, M/6332.
10. APP, B/A 1602, file no. 2000-1773, note of Paris, June 7, 1908.
11. AN, F7, 12914, report of Paris, June 9, 1908.
12. APP, B/A 1602, note of July 29, 1908.
13. *Ibid.*, note of August 1, 1908.
14. Julliard, *Clemenceau*, pp. 101-103.
15. APP, B/A 1602, note of July 28, 1908.
16. Quoted by Julliard, *Clemenceau*, p. 146.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 145-146.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 159-161.
19. APP, B/A 1602, note of August 30, 1908.
20. *Ibid.*, note of August 1, 1908, and note of August 3, 1908.
21. For Merrheim's fear of arrest, see APP, B/A 1602, note of August 3, 1908; for his concerns about the police, see *ibid.*, note of August 6, 1908 and note of August 14, 1908.
22. For these two communications, see APP, B/A 1603, note of August 6, 1908 and APP, B/A 1602, note of August 3, 1908.
23. APP, B/A 1602, note of August 23, 1908. See also APP, B/A 1686, note of Paris, January 29, 1909, for another report indicating that Merrheim was upset at having been passed over.
24. APP, B/A 1602, note of September 7, 1908.

25. *Ibid.*, note of August 23, 1908.
26. APP, B/A 1686, note of Paris, January 29, 1909.
27. See the following police reports for this incident: APP, B/A 1602, note of July 20, 1908 (file no. 2000-1773); note of August 16, 1908; note of August 18, 1908; note of August 23, 1908; note of August 27, 1908 (two reports); and note of September 16, 1908.
28. *Ibid.*, note of October 18, 1908; see also in the same carton the notes of October 22, 1908, and October 28, 1908.
29. APP, B/A 1686, note of Paris, January 29, 1909.
30. APP, B/A 1602, note of October 30, 1908.
31. *Ibid.*, note of July 18, 1908 (file no. 2000-1773).
32. See, for example, *ibid.*, note of August 12, 1908. This carton is an excellent source of information on CGT activities before the Congress of Marseille.
33. For this meeting, see AN, F7, 12525, note of June 16, 1908.
34. APP, B/A 1606, note of October 5, 1908 (file no. 2000-1773-2).
35. For an example of such activities, see AN, F7, 12525, note of June 20, 1908. For the assessment of them, see APP, B/A 1606, note of September 25, 1908 (file no. 2000-1773-2).
36. APP, B/A 1606, note of August 28, 1908; note of August 30, 1908 (file no. 200-177-2); and note of September 19, 1908 (file no. 2000-1773-2).
37. *Ibid.*, note of October 2, 1908.
38. CGT, *XVIIe Congrès national corporatif* (Marseille, 1908), pp. 48-49.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.
40. For Merrheim's views on proportional representation, see *ibid.*, p. 174; and on antimilitarism, see *ibid.*, p. 213.
41. AN, F7, 12525, note of October 13, 1908.
42. Julliard, *Clemenceau*, pp. 125-132.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 123-140. See also APP, B/A 1603, note of January 1, 1910.
44. A report summarizing the ideological breakdown in the Federation of Metalworkers is in both APP, B/A 1602, note of November 20, 1908, and in AN, F7, 13773, note of Paris, November 20, 1908.
45. For the election, see *VP*, no. 440, February 28-March 7, 1909, p. 1; no. 441, March 7-14, 1909, p. 1; no. 470, September 26-October 3, 1909, p. 3.
46. For this conference, see *Compte rendu de la Conférence extraordinaire des Fédérations nationales et des Bourses du Travail ou Unions de Syndicats, tenue les 1er, 2 et 3 juin 1909, Paris* (Paris, n.d. [1909]), and AN, F7, 13568, note of June 3, 1909, M/3204.
47. *VP*, no. 477, November 14-21, 1909, pp. 3-4.
48. The Congress of Toulouse reported that Lévy had been reelected treasurer but that he had resigned and Charles Marck was elected in his place; see CGT, *XVIIe Congrès national corporatif* (Toulouse, 1910), pp. 5-6.
49. Alphonse Merrheim, in *La Révolution*, no. 20, February 20, 1909, p. 2.
50. Alphonse Merrheim, in *ibid.*, no. 28, February 28, 1909, p. 1.
51. APP, A/B 1603, note of February 25, 1909.
52. CGT, *Conférence extraordinaire des Fédérations nationales [...], tenue les 1er, 2, et 3 juin 1909* (Paris, 1909), pp. 95-96; and CGT, *XVIIe Congrès national corporatif* (Toulouse, 1910), pp. 159-160.
53. APP, B/A 1603, note of May 31, 1909, and note of June 2, 1909; see also *ibid.*, note of February 5, 1909, which states that Merrheim had little chance to succeed Griffuelhes because he was so closely associated with the secretary-general.
54. APP, B/A 1602, December 11, 1908. See also APP, B/A 1603, note of January 20, 1909, for a more detailed report on this kind of charge.
55. APP, B/A 1602, note of December 14, 1908.
56. APP, B/A 1602, note of July 20, 1908 (file no. 2000-1773).
57. *Ibid.*
58. CGT, *XVIIe Congrès national corporatif* (Toulouse, 1910), pp. 166-170.
59. APP, B/A 1603, note of February 9, 1909.
60. CGT, *XVIIe Congrès national corporatif* (Toulouse, 1910), pp. 46-47.
61. For the postal workers' strike, see *ibid.*, pp. 10-12; for the detention of Marck and Torton, see *ibid.*, pp. 8-10.
62. For a brief summary of the incidents, see CGT, *XVIIIe Congrès national corporatif* (Le Havre, 1912), pp. 4-6. For a play on the Durand affair, see Armand Salacrou, *Boulevard Durand. Chronique d'un procès oublié. Drame en deux parties* (first staged in Le Havre in 1956; Paris: Gallimard, 1960).

63. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
64. *Ibid.*
65. *VP*, no. 17, December 1, 1910, p. 2; their emphasis.
66. AN, F7, 13773, note of Valenciennes, December 13, 1910.
67. CGT, *XVIIIe Congrès national corporatif* (Le Havre, 1912), p. 46.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
71. CGT, *Conférence ordinaire des Fédérations nationales et des Bourses du Travail ou Unions de Syndicats, tenue les 13, 14, et 15 juillet 1913, Paris, Compte rendu* (Paris, 1914), pp. 11-17.
72. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-39.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53 (Jouhaux's resolution); for a call for a general strike, see *ibid.*, p. 55; for Merrheim's position, see *ibid.*, p. 53-56.
76. Alphonse Merrheim, in BS, no. 826, July 30, 1913, p. 1.
77. Léon Jouhaux, 'La Crise Syndicaliste', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, nos. 253-254, July-August, 1913, pp. 126-129. This article appeared originally in BS, August 27, 1913.

Chapter 5

1. Joseph Braun, Henri Galantus, and Jean Latapie, in OM, May, 1903, p. 1.
2. Albert Bouchet, in OM, May, 1904, p.1.
3. UFOM, *XIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1905), pp. 245-246.
4. 'Congrès régional des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de la région du Nord, tenu à Lille, le 19 Mars 1905', in OM, no. 162, May 1, 1905, p. 4.
5. UFOM, *XIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1905), p. 37.
6. CGT, *XVe Congrès national corporatif* (Amiens, 1906), p. 191; also *ibid.*, see pp. 186-191, for the debate on the issue of unity in the building trades industry.
7. OM, no. 189, August 1, 1907, p. 2.
8. UFOM, *XIIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1907), pp. 231-233.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 233-235.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 171 and p. 236.
11. Alphonse Merrheim, 'Vers la fusion', in OM, October 1, 1908, pp. 1-2.
12. 'Confédération Générale du Travail-Section des Fédérations- Séance du 7 Avril 1908', in *VP*, no. 400, May 31-June 7, 1908, p. 4.
13. CGT, *XVIe Congrès national corporatif* (Marseille, 1908), p. 137 (the resolution), and p. 292 (the vote). For the entire debate on this issue, see *ibid.*, pp. 122-148.
14. FOM, *Congrès unitaire des Fédérations des Métallurgistes, des Mouleurs, et des Mécaniciens, tenu à Paris, les 28, 29, et 30 Mai 1909* (Paris, n.d. [1909]).
15. CGT, *XVIIe Congrès national corporatif* (Toulouse, 1910), pp. 238-257.
16. FOM, *Congrès unitaire* (Paris, 1909).
17. FOM, *Compte rendu du 1er Congrès national* (Paris, 1911), p. 7.
18. APP, B/A 1606, note of September 24, 1908 (file no. 2000-1773-2), and AN, F7, 13771, note of May 30, 1909 ('Congrès unitaire de la Métallurgie').
19. AN, F7, 13771, note of May 28, 1909 ('Congrès unitaire').
20. *Ibid.*, note of May 30, 1909 ('Congrès unitaire').
21. For the attack on the CGT, see AN, F7, 12525, note of January 1, 1909; for Ingweiller's criticism of Merrheim, see AN, F7, 13773, note of April 23, 1909.
22. APP, B/A 1606, note of July 23, 1908 (file no. 200-177-2).
23. APP, B/A 1602, note of December 3, 1908.
24. At one meeting of the CGT's Confederal Committee, Merrheim stated that the secretaries of his federation were willing to resign if this would facilitate unity. The proposal was not pursued further by anyone. Moreover, given Merrheim's fierce opposition to suggestions for the limitation of the secretary's term of office as well as his own ambitions, it is obvious he never seriously entertained this proposal. See 'Confédération Générale du Travail-Section des Fédérations- Séance du 7 avril 1908', in *VP*, no. 400, May 31-June 7, 1908, p. 4. See also UFOM, *XIIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1907), pp. 148-150 and pp. 161-161 (for an attack on the concept of permanent secretaries) and pp. 131-135 and p. 165 (for a rebuttal).

25. UFOM, *XIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1905), p. 22; FOM, *Rapport moral, administratif, et financier de l'exercice du 1er juillet 1909 au 31 mai 1911* (Paris, n.d.[1911]), pp. 4-5; and FOM, *Compte rendu du 2e Congrès national* (Paris, 1913), pp. 11-20.
26. AN, F7, 13771, 'XIIe Congrès national de la Métallurgie- Compte rendu', pp. 15-17, and *VP*, no. 257, September 17-24, 1905, p. 3.
27. Louis Niel, 'Le Parfait syndicalisme', in *VP*, no. 258, September 24-October 1, 1905, pp. 1-2; Alphonse Merrheim, 'La Crise syndicaliste', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, nos. 215-216, November-December, 1909. p. 291; Merrheim's emphasis.
28. For Latapie's connections to the ministry, see AN, F7, 12765, note of Paris, November 24, 1909, M/3693; for Merrheim's attack of these leaders, see AN, F7, 13773, note of December 1, 1908, M/2355. A copy of this note is in AN, F7, 12765, note of Paris, December 1, 1908, M/2355;
29. For Galantus's and Latapie's resignation, see AN, F7, 13773, note of January 20, 1909, M/2522. See also *ibid.*, note of February 13, 1909, M/2624. For Blanchard's defeat, see AN, F7, 12765, note of June 2, 1909, and note of Paris, July 2, 1909, M/3329.
30. AN, F7, 13773, note of Paris, June 25, 1909, M/3296.
31. FOM, *Compte rendu du 2e Congrès national* (Paris, 1913), pp. 11-20.
32. UFOM, *XIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1905), pp. 32-35.
33. UFOM, *XIIIe Congrès national des Ouvriers Métallurgistes* (Paris, 1907), p. 62.
34. FOM, *Compte rendu du 2e Congrès national* (Paris, 1913) p. 23.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
39. For what follows, see Merrheim's speech to the congress in *ibid.*, pp. 92-98.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 98-100.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 169-170.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 163-164.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 169-172.
50. Victor Griffuelhes, in *BS*, no. 638, January 23, 1913, p. 1; no. 639, January 24, 1913, p. 1; no. 642, January 27, 1913, pp. 1-2; and no. 647, February 1, 1913, p. 1. These articles are reprinted in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, nos. 247-248, January-February, 1913, pp. 116-120.
51. Griffuelhes, in *BS*, no. 642, January 27, 1913, pp. 1-2.
52. *Ibid.*, no. 639, January 24, 1913, p. 1.
53. *Ibid.*, no. 642, January 27, 1913, pp. 1-2.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*, no. 647, February 1, 1913, p. 1.
56. Alphonse Merrheim, in *BS*, no. 643, January 28, 1913, p. 1; no. 651, February 5, 1913, p. 1; no. 653, February 7, 1913, p. 1; no. 660, February 14, 1913, p. 1; no. 672, February 26, 1913, p. 1. These are reprinted in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, nos. 247-248, January-February, 1913, pp. 120-124.
57. Merrheim, in *BS*, no. 643, January 28, 1913, p. 1.
58. *Ibid.*, no. 660, February 14, 1913, p. 1.
59. AN, F7, 13774, note of Paris, March 14, 1914, M/9054.
60. FOM, *Compte rendu du 2e Congrès national* (Paris, 1913), pp. 198-199.
61. What follows is covered in Christian Gras, 'La Fédération des Métaux en 1913-1914 et l'évolution du syndicalisme révolutionnaire français', in *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 77, October-December, 1971, pp. 85-111.
62. The expulsion case was also a major topic of discussion in the syndicalist press (see *VP* during 1913-1914); an important item for the police (see AN, F7, 13774, and F7, 13574, and APP, B/A 1605); an issue at several Executive Committee meetings of the CGT (these are reported in *VP*); and the subject of a study in *Le Mouvement Socialiste* (nos. 259-260, January-February 1914, and nos. 263-264, May-June, 1914).

Chapter 6

1. Jacques Julliard, *Fernand Pelloutier et les origines du syndicalisme d'action directe* (Paris, 1971), p.171, and note no. 1, p. 171.
2. Many of the issues concerning the writings are dealt with also by Christian Gras, 'Merrheim et le capitalisme', in *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 63, April-June 1968, pp. 143-163; Gras, however, is primarily interested in testing Merrheim's facts and conclusions.
3. AN, F7, 12765, note of February 6, 1909.
4. APP, B/A 1603, note of January 20, 1909.
5. This letter is in the Merrheim Letters, IRM: to Maxime Leroy, September 10, 1909, and is quoted by Gras, 'Merrheim et le capitalisme', pp. 146-147.
6. Alphonse Merrheim, 'Le Mouvement ouvrier dans le bassin de Longwy', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, nos. 168-169, December 1-15, 1905, p. 426, and Alphonse Merrheim, *L'Organisation patronale: Syndicats, comités régionaux, ententes et comptoirs, assurance contre les grèves* (29 pp., Paris, n.d.[1908]), p. 2. This pamphlet preceded his larger study of the same subject that began in article form in July 1908 in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*. The pamphlet can be found in AN, F7, 13771.
7. Alphonse Merrheim, 'Comment j'ai découvert l'Ouenza', in *La Révolution*, première année, no. 4, February 4, 1909, p. 1.
8. See Alphonse Merrheim's articles in *La Révolution*: no. 25, February 25, 1909, p. 1; no. 26, February 26, 1909, p. 1; no. 27, February 27, 1909, p. 2; and no. 28, February 28, 1909, p. 1. See also Alphonse Merrheim, 'Un Scandale capitaliste. L'Affaire de l'Ouenza', *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 208, March 1909, pp. 178-205; and Alphonse Merrheim, *L'Affaire de l'Ouenza. A Genou devant le comité des forges. La Révision de la loi de 1810 sur les mines* (Paris, 1910), 64 pp.
9. Alphonse Merrheim, 'L'Affaire de l'Ouenza. Une Bande internationale accapare les mines français', in *La Révolution*, no. 25, February 25, 1909, p. 1.
10. Maxime Leroy, 'Griffuelhes et Merrheim', in *L'Homme Réel*, no. 40, April 1937, p. 10-11.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-14. See also Maxime Leroy, *La Coutume ouvrière. Syndicats, bourses du travail, fédérations professionnelles, corporatives, doctrines et institutions* (Paris, 1913), vol. 1, p. 9.
12. See Hasfeld's account in Edouard Dolléans, *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier*, (Paris, 1939; reprint ed., Paris, 1957), vol. II, p. 171.
13. *Ibid.*, and Edouard Dolléans, *Alphonse Merrheim*, (Paris, 1939), pp. 13-14.
14. In 1913, Merrheim broke with Delaisi when he discovered that the latter, who seems to have had royalist connections, was trying to funnel government funds to *La Bataille Syndicaliste*. The government was trying to weaken the influential journal *L'Humanité* by strengthening such rivals as *La Bataille Syndicaliste*. For an excellent discussion of this episode, see Paul Mazgaj, *The Action Française and Revolutionary Syndicalism* (Chapel Hill, 1979), pp. 128-149.
15. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 51, November 1898, pp. 2-3 (the article is dated 'Roubaix, October 6, 1898').
16. For Alphonse Merrheim's views on unity, see *Le Cuivre*, no. 77, January 1901, p. 3; for his views on socialism, see *ibid.*, no. 79, March 1901, p. 3.
17. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 78, February 1901, p. 3.
18. Alphonse Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 108, November 30-December 7, 1902, p. 2 (this article is dated 'Roubaix, November 20, 1902').
19. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 82, June 1901, pp. 2-3.
20. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 97, September 1902, p.2.
21. Alphonse Merrheim, in *OM*, no. 184, March 1, 1907, p. 2.
22. Alphonse Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 371, November 17-24, 1907, pp. 2-3. See also two other articles he wrote on these mining concessions: Alphonse Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 372, November 27-December 1, 1907, p. 2 (both articles are on the same page).
23. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 80, April 1901, pp. 1-2.
24. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 93, May 1902, pp. 2-3.
25. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 86, October 1901, pp. 2-3.
26. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 97, September 1902, p. 2; Merrheim's emphasis.
27. Alphonse Merrheim, in *OM*, no. 168, November 1, 1905, p. 2.
28. Alphonse Merrheim, 'L'Organisation patronale en France', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 200, July 15, 1908, p. 6.
29. See Francis Delaisi, 'Le Règne de l'acier,' *Pages Libres*, no. 245, September 9, 1905, pp.

217-227, no. 246, September 16, 1905, pp. 237-247; and no. 247, September 23, 1905, pp. 265-277. The form and content of this study were so similar to Merrheim's work that Delaisi's influence is apparent. Delaisi began by indicating that workers had to familiarize themselves with the details of their industry to fight it successfully. Concerning metalworkers, he continued, the history of their industry is not only a study 'of our current civilization' it is also a description 'of one of its most complex wheels'. See *Pages Libres*, no. 245, September 9, 1905, p. 219. Delaisi devoted the rest of the study to a history of the steel industry, its technical development, interlocking trusts, and its government connections. Merrheim also drew material from other published studies. For instance, Francis Delaisi, 'Le Régime démocratique actuel,' in *Pages Libres*, no. 177, May 21, 1904, pp. 401-420. In 1906, Delaisi proposed a project for an eight-hour workday. See *Pages Libres*, no. 278, April 28, 1906, pp. 423-434 and 'Les 8 Heures réalisées dans la Métallurgie,' in *VP*, no. 288, May 1, 1906, p. 4. The following year Delaisi studied the American copper industry trust. See Francis Delaisi, 'Le Krach du cuivre', in *Pages Libres*, no. 358, November 9, 1907, pp. 469-475.)

30. Shortly before Merrheim's major work on the steel trust appeared, he published two large investigations, one on the automobile industry and the other on the status of industrial apprenticeship. See Alphonse Merrheim, 'La Crise de l'automobile', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, pt. I, no. 195, February 15, 1908, pp. 81-100, and pt. II, no. 196, March 15, 1908, pp. 171-183. This series, too, was preceded by many smaller studies leading to it: Alphonse Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 354, July 21-28, 1907, pp. 2-3; no. 367, October 20-27, 1907, pp. 2-3; no. 368, October 27- November 3, 1907, pp. 2-3; no. 369, November 3-10, 1907, p. 3; and Merrheim, in *OM*, no. 187, June 1, 1907, pp. 2-3; no. 192, November 1, 1907, pp. 2-3; no. 194, January 1, 1908, p. 3; and no. 198, May 1, 1908, p. 2. For apprenticeship, see Alphonse Merrheim, 'La Crise de l'apprentissage,' in *OM*, no. 196, March 1, 1908, p. 1, and Alphonse Merrheim, 'Enquête ouvrière sur la crise de l'apprentissage,' in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, pt. I, no. 197, April 15, 1908, pp. 241-267; pt. II, no. 198, May 15, 1908, pp. 321-340; pt. III, no. 199, June 15, 1908, pp. 401-417; pt. IV, no. 201, August 15, 1908, pp. 96-98; and pt. V, no. 203, October 15, 1908, pp. 278-284. Merrheim's work on the steel trust appeared a few months after these studies and it can be assumed, therefore, that he was working on it at the same time as he was working on the others. It is best to begin with his work on the steel trust, since so many of his other studies revolve around it.

31. See the bibliography under Merrheim's writings.

32. Merrheim, *L'Organization patronale*, pp. 1-2.

33. Alphonse Merrheim, 'L'Organization patronale en France', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 202, September 15, 1908, p. 180.

34. Alphonse Merrheim, *La Métallurgie: Son Origine et son développement*. Les Forces motrices, (Paris, 1913) pp. 6-7.

35. *Ibid.*, p. v.

36. Alphonse Merrheim, 'Enquête ouvrière sur la crise de l'apprentissage', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, pt. II, no. 198, May 15, 1908, pp. 331-332.

37. Georges Friedmann, *Industrial Society. The Emergence of the Human Problems of Automation* (New York, 1955), p. 41.

38. This discussion is drawn from Patrick Fridenson, *Histoire des usines Renault. Naissance de la grande entreprise, 1898- 1939* (Paris, 1972), pp. 70-79.

39. Friedmann, *Industrial Society*, p. 43.

40. Alphonse Merrheim, 'La Méthode Taylor', in *La Vie Ouvrière*, pt. 1, no. 82, February 20, 1913, pp. 210-226, and pt. 2, no. 83, March 5, 1913, pp. 298-309. Merrheim also had a series on Taylorism in *VP*; see no. 648, February 23-March 3, 1913, pp. 1-2; no. 649, March 3-10, 1913, pp. 1-2; no. 651, March 16-23, 1913, p. 2; no. 653, March 30-April 6, 1913, p. 2; no. 654, April 6-13, 1913, p. 2; no. 655, April 13-20, 1913, p. 2; and no. 656, April 20-27, 1913, p. 2.

41. Merrheim, 'La Méthode Taylor', in *La Vie Ouvrière*, pt. I, no. 82, February 20, 1913, p. 212.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 214-216.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 216-217.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

45. Jules Raveté, 'Une Défense de la méthode Taylor', in *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 107, March 5, 1914, pp. 257-267. See also Georges Friedmann, *Industrial Society*, pp. 268-269, and Aimée Moutet, 'Les Origines du système de Taylor en France. Le Point du vue patronal (1907-1914)', in *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 93, October-December 1975, pp. 15-49. For a brief portrait of Raveté, see Jean Maitron, ed., *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français*, Pt. III, vol. XV (Paris, 1977), p. 11.

46. Raveté, 'Une Défense de la méthode Taylor', p. 260.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 265-267.
48. See Alphonse Merrheim, 'La Méthode Taylor. Une discussion', in *La Vie Ouvrière*, pt. I, no. 108, March 20, 1914, pp. 345-362, and pt. II, no. 109-110, April 5-20, 1914, pp. 385-398; Alphonse Merrheim, review of *Le Système Taylor*, by André Vielleville, in *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 115, July 5, 1914, pp. 45-49; and André Vielleville, *Le Système Taylor*, thèse, (Paris, 1914), pp. 139-143 (for an interview with Merrheim).
49. Merrheim, 'La Méthode Taylor. Une discussion', pt. II, p. 396.
50. Vielleville, pp. 139-143.
51. Merrheim, 'La Méthode Taylor. Une discussion', pt. II, p. 398. For a continuation of the debate between Merrheim and Raveté, see 'Une Discussion sur le système Taylor', pt. I ('Brèves observations pour Merrheim', by Jules Raveté) and pt. II ('Réponse de Merrheim', by A. Merrheim), in *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 116, July 20, 1914, pp. 103-111.
52. Merrheim, *La Métallurgie*, pp. 6-7.
53. *Ibid.*, p. VI.
54. *Ibid.*, p. X.
55. For his opinion on the Comité des Forges, see Alphonse Merrheim, 'L'Organisation patronale en France', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 205, December 15, 1908, pp. 422-425; for the source of the quotation, see *ibid.*, p. 422.

Chapter 7

1. CGT, *XXe Congrès national corporatif* (Lyon, 1919), p. 169.
2. See, for example, Jean-Jacques Becker, *Le Carnet B. Les Pouvoirs publics et l'antimilitarisme avant la guerre de 1914* (Paris, 1973), and Georges Haupt, *Socialism and the Great War. The Collapse of the Second International* (Oxford, 1972).
3. Jacques Julliard, 'La CGT devant la guerre', in *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 49, October-December 1964, pp. 47-62.
4. Becker, *Le Carnet B*, pp. 23-24.
5. See the account of the Roubaix-Tourcoing union meeting in *Le Cuivre*, no. 84, August, 1901, p. 2.
6. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Cuivre*, no. 96, August, 1902, p. 3.
7. Alphonse Merrheim, in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, nos. 166-167, November 1-15, 1905, pp. 328-331.
8. Alphonse Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 377, December 29, 1907, p. 2.
9. Francis Delaisi studied the signs of impending war sooner; see, for example, 'Bruits de guerre', in *Pages Libres*, no. 236, July 8, 1905, pp. 29-40. Merrheim, however, was the first in the workers' ranks to signal the danger so clearly. See Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 466, August 29-September 5, 1909, pp. 1-2; no. 469, September 19-26, 1909, p. 2; and no. 472, October 10-17, 1909, p. 2. See also Alphonse Merrheim, 'L'Approche de la guerre', in *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 31, pt. I, January 5, 1911, pp. 1-17; no. 32, January 20, 1911, pt. II, pp. 101-113; no. 33, February 5, 1911, pt. III, pp. 129-141; no. 34, February 20, 1911, pt. IV, pp. 242-248. There is also information on Merrheim's articles in Edouard Dolléans, *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier*, (Paris, 1939; reprint ed., Paris, 1957), vol. II, pp. 184-188. Finally, see also Alphonse Merrheim, 'Les Mineurs se leveront-ils?', in *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 58, February 20, 1912, pp. 241-277, where he also studies aspects of English-German economic competition and its relation to the arms race.
10. Alphonse Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 466, August 29-September 5, 1909, pp. 1-2.
11. Merrheim, 'L'Approche de la guerre', pt. I, p. 1.
12. *Ibid.*, no. 34, February 20, 1911, pt. IV, p. 243.
13. Alphonse Merrheim, in *BS*, no. 599, December 15, 1912, p. 1.
14. APP, B/A 1642, note of December 15, 1912 (dossier no. 4).
15. AN, F7, 13774, note of Paris, December 3, 1912, M/7205.
16. CGT, *XVIe Congrès national corporatif* (Marseille, 1908), p. 213.
17. CGT, *XVIIIe Congrès national corporatif* (Le Havre, 1912), pp. 191-192 and p. 193.
18. CGT, *Le Prolétariat contre la guerre et les trois ans* (Paris, n.d. [August or September 1913], p. 59).
19. CGT, *Conférence ordinaire des Fédérations nationales et des Bourses du Travail ou Unions de Syndicats, tenue les 13, 14 et 15 juillet 1913. Compte rendu* (Paris, 1914), pp. 52-53.
20. See *VP*, no. 720, July 13-19, 1914, p. 1. The agenda for the congress was also publicized at the headquarters of the Federation of Metalworkers; see FOM, *PV*, July 10, 1914.

21. 'Enquête sur l'idée de patrie et de la classe ouvrière', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 160-161, August 1-15, 1905, pp. 431-470; no. 162-163, September 1-15, 1905, pp. 36-71; no. 164-165, October 1-15, 1905, pp. 202-231; no. 166-167, November 1-15, 1905, pp. 320-338.
22. For Merrheim's entire response, see *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 166-167, November 1-15, 1905, pp. 328-333.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 328-331; see also Victor Daline, 'Alphonse Merrheim et sa 'correspondance confidentielle'' (Moscow, 1965; French edition, in *Hommes et idées*, pp. 232-342, translated by Robert Rodov, Moscow, 1983), p. 263, for a document in which Merrheim eschews the word 'antipatriotism', wishing instead to state that workers simply fight against their employers.
24. Merrheim, in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 166-167, November 1-15, 1905, pp. 328-333.
25. Louis Niel, in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 160-161, August 1-15, 1905, p. 462; Niel's emphasis.
26. *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 162-163, September 1-15, 1905, p. 51.
27. Raoul Lenoir, in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 160-161, August 1-15, 1905, p. 449.
28. See *ibid.*, pp. 442-448 (Griffuelhes); pp. 465-470 (Yvetot); and pp. 451-465 (Niel).
29. Julliard, 'La CGT devant la guerre', p. 49; and CGT, *XVe Congrès national corporatif* (Amiens, 1906), p. 175.
30. AN, F7, 12493, note of October 13, 1906.
31. CGT, *XVe Congrès national corporatif* (Amiens, 1906), pp. 304-314.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 177-178.
35. CGT, *XVIe Congrès national corporatif* (Marseille, 1908), pp. 179-180.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 186-192.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 198-200.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 183-185.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 213.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
42. Julliard, 'La CGT devant la guerre', p. 51.
43. CGT, *XVIe Congrès national corporatif* (Marseille, 1908), pp. 60-165.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 158-161.
45. Alphonse Merrheim, in *VP*, no. 566, July 30-August 6, 1911, p. 1.
46. 'Fédération des Métaux', in *VP*, no. 566, July 30-August 6, 1911, p. 1.
47. See 'L'Ordre du jour', in *VP*, no. 568, August 13-20, 1911, p. 1.
48. CGT, *XVIIIe Congrès national corporatif* (Le Havre, 1912), p. 192.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 187-189.
50. Alphonse Merrheim, 'La Désertion et la CGT', in *BS*, no. 585, December 1, 1912, p. 1, and no. 586, December 2, 1912, p. 1. See also Merrheim's explanation to his own federation, in FOM, *Le 2e Congrès national* (Paris, 1913), pp. 47-48.
51. Merrheim, in *BS*, no. 585, December 1, 1912, p. 1; Merrheim's emphasis.
52. CGT, *XVIIIe Congrès national corporatif* (Le Havre, 1912), p. 193.
53. CGT, *Le Prolétariat contre la guerre et les trois ans*, pp. 35-49.
54. See the following issues of *VP*: no. 630, October 20-27, 1912, p. 1; no. 631, October 3-November 3, 1912, p. 1; no. 364, November 17-24, 1912, pp. 1-2; no. 635, November 24-December 1, 1912, p. 2; no. 639, December 22-29, 1912, p. 1. For an excellent summary of events, see *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 76, November 20, 1912, pp. 285-289; see also the preceding issue, no. 75, November 5, 1912, pp. 236-238, for a copy of the CGT's manifesto protesting the Balkan wars.
55. CGT, *Le Prolétariat contre la guerre et les trois ans*, pp. 59-61.
56. This meeting is covered in *VP*, no. 672, August 10-17, 1913, under the heading 'Comité Confédérale - Séance du Mai 1913'.
57. See *VP*, no. 662, June 1-7, 1913, p. 1.
58. *VP*, no. 667, July 6-13, 1913, p. 1, and *VP*, July 13, 1913, Numéro Spécial.
59. *VP*, no. 637, August 17-24, 1913, pp. 2-3.
60. AN, F7, 13774, note of Bordeaux, September 6, 1913.
61. CGT *Conférence ordinaire des Fédérations nationales et des Bourses du Travail ou Unions de Syndicats, tenue les 13, 14 et 15 juillet 1913* (Paris, 1914), pp. 52-53.
62. FOM, *Le 2e Congrès national* (Paris, 1913), pp. 182-183.
63. See *VP*, no. 720, July 13-19, 1914, p. 1.

Chapter 8

1. *BS*, July 26, 1914, p. 1.
2. *Ibid.*, July 27, 1914, p. 1.
3. Reprinted in Alfred Rosmer, *Le Mouvement ouvrier pendant la guerre. De L'Union sacrée à Zimmerwald*, vol. I (Paris, 1936), pp. 493-494.
4. *AN*, F7, 13574, note of Paris, August 1, 1914, M/9538.
5. *Ibid.*, note of Paris, July 29, 1914, M/9529.
6. *Ibid.*, note of Paris, August 1, 1914, M/9538.
7. *Ibid.*, note of July 31, 1914, M/9535.
8. *BS*, August 4, 1914, p. 1.
9. *BS*, August 5, 1914, p. 1.
10. *AN*, F7, 13574, note of Paris, July 29, 1914, M/9529.
11. Quoted by Georges Lefranc, *Le Mouvement syndical sous la Troisième République*, (Paris, 1967), p. 193.
12. Maurice Labi, *La Grande Division des travailleurs: Première Scission de la C.G.T. (1914-1921)* (Paris, 1964), p. 45.
13. Edouard Dolléans, *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier*, (Paris, 1957), vol.II, p. 216.
14. *AN*, F7, 13574, note of Paris, July 31, 1914, M/9535.
15. Louis Malvy, *Mon crime* (Paris, 1921), pp. 37-38.
16. *AN*, F7, 13574, note of Paris, August 6, 1914, M/9542.
17. Quoted by Robert Wohl, *French Communism in the Making, 1914-1921* (Stanford, 1966), p. 59; see also Annie Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français, 1914-1920. Contribution à l'histoire du mouvement ouvrier français* (Paris, 1964), vol. I, pp. 82-83.
18. It is not necessary in this chapter to reconstruct the history of the antiwar movement among French workers, since so much has already been written on the subject. For the Zimmerwald movement and France, see Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français*, vol. I, pp. 97-112. For the Zimmerwald conference, see Merle Fainsod, *International Communism and the World War* (Cambridge, [Mass.], 1935; reprint ed., Garden City, 1969); Olga M. Gankin and H. H. Fisher, eds., *The Bolsheviks and the World War. The Origins of the Third International* (Stanford, 1940); Horst Lademacher, ed., *Die Zimmerwalder Bewegung. Protokolle und Korrespondenz*, 2 vols. (The Hague, 1967); and Wohl, *French Communism*.
19. A complete translation into French of Liebknecht's statement is in APP, B/A 1535, note of Paris, February 3, 1915 (dossier no. 7, 'Déclaration de Liebknecht à la Séance du Reichstag le 2 Décembre 1914').
20. See *VP*, numéro special, May 1, 1915, p. 2, for a copy of a letter Merrheim sent on October 3, 1914, to Gruber of the International Syndicalist Bureau in Switzerland.
21. Alphonse Merrheim in *BS*, December 13, 1914, p. 1, and December 20, 1914, p. 1. Merrheim's program, which is the basis of this analysis, is in the first article.
22. J. Rocher, *Lénine et le mouvement zimmerwaldien en France* (Paris, 1934), pp. 19-20.
23. *FOM*, PV, April 17, 1915.
24. *AN*, F7, 13574, note of Paris, April 19, 1915, M/9746.
25. See *VP*, numéro special, May 1, 1915, pp. 1-2.
26. For this issue, see *UM*, no. 61, August 1914-May 1915. This journal did not appear regularly during the war. The dates on this issue indicate that this was its only number during this long period. Merrheim's emphasis.
27. For criticism of Merrheim, see 'Pour la Fédération du Bâtiment', in *UM*, no. 62, May-December, 1915, p. 21; for the rumor of his arrest, see *AN*, F7, 13574, note of May 7, 1915, M/9784.
28. *FOM*, PV, June 5 [1915]; for the source of the quotation, see *FOM*, PV, June 19, 1915.
29. *AN*, F7, 13272, telegram of May 1, 1915 (no. 19051/49472); *ibid.*, 'Rapport' of Lyon, May 3, 1915; *ibid.*, note of July 3, 1915, no. 9866, and July 8, 1915, no. 5589.
30. Rosmer, *Le Mouvement ouvrier pendant la guerre*, vol.I, p. 351-352.
31. Quoted in a letter Rosmer wrote to Monatte, dated May 17, 1915, in Colette Chambelland and Jean Maitron, eds., *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communism. Les Archives de Pierre Monatte* (Paris, 1980), p. 133.
32. Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français* vol. I, pp. 103-106.
33. The Second International, *VIIe Congrès socialiste international* (Stuttgart, 1907), pp. 175-179.
34. See Georges Haupt, *The Socialists and the Great War. The Collapse of the Second International* (Oxford, 1972).
35. *FOM*, PV, September 2, 1915.

36. Rocher, *Lénine et le mouvement zimmerwaldien en France*, note no. 2, p. 26. There are several police reports concerning the Swiss trip, all containing essentially the same information; some are more complete than others. See the following: AN, F7, 13574, note of September 2, 1915; AN, F7, 13069, note of September 2, 1915; note of Pontarlier, September 12, 1915, no. 2641; note of Paris, September 16, 1915, M/9955.
37. AN, F7, 13574, note of September 2, 1915, and AN, F7, 13069, note of September 2, 1915. These two reports conclude with information on Merrheim's physical appearance. They describe him as short, of medium weight, with chestnut colored hair and a mustache. Under 'peculiarities' they listed his 'hair, long like an artist's and usually topped by a black felt hat'.
38. FOM, PV, October 9, 1915.
39. For the Conference of Zimmerwald, see Alphonse Merrheim, CGT, *XXe Congrès national corporatif* (Lyon, 1919), p. 171; and Merrheim's preface to Max Hirsch's book *Le Mirage du Soviétisme* (Paris, 1921), pp. 7-10. Also see Fainsod, *International Communism and the World War*, note no. 16, p. 66, and Dolléans, *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier*, vol. II, p. 235. A complete copy of Lenin's resolution is in Gankin and Fisher, eds., *The Bolsheviks and the World War*, pp. 349-351. See also V.I. Lenin, 'The Imperialist War', in *Collected Works* (New York, 1942), vol. XVIII, pp. 346-349.
40. Alphonse Merrheim, in CGT, *XXe Congrès national corporatif* (Lyon, 1919), p. 171.
41. See Gankin and Fisher, eds., *The Bolsheviks and the World War*, pp. 329-333.
42. APP, B/A 1535, note of November 10, 1915 (dossier no. 13).
43. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, 'Les Marxistes révolutionnaire à la conférence socialiste internationale (5-8 septembre 1915)', in Lénine, [V.I.], and Zinoviev, [Gregori] *Contre le Courant*, (translated by Victor Serge and Parajanine and originally published October 11, 1915; reprint ed., Paris, 1970), vol. II, pp. 17-20.
44. FOM, PV, October 9, 1915.
45. See, FOM, PV, November 6, 1915, and 'Conférence de Zimmerwald', in UM, no. 62, May-December 1915, pp. 18-19.
46. For a few examples of Merrheim's many activities, see APP, B/A 1558, note of Paris, November 7, 1915 (dossier no. 3a), and note of November 10, 1915 (dossier no. 13); AN, F7, 13574, note of Paris, November 7, 1915; APP, B/A 1535, note of November 13, 1915 (dossier no. 13); *Bulletin de la Commission Socialiste Internationale*, no. 2, December 27, 1915. For the police's evaluation of Merrheim, see AN, F7, 13574, note of Paris, November 7, 1915 (dossier no. 3a), and note of November 10, 1915 (dossier no. 13). For additional information on the scope and details of Merrheim's campaign, see, for example, the following: APP, B/A 1558, note of Paris, November 22, 1915 (dossier no. 3a); APP, B/A 1535, note of Paris, November 25, 1915 (dossier no. 80), and note of December 23, 1915 (dossier no. 80 bis); AN, F7, 13371 (dossier no. 46 under the heading 'Merrheim'); AN, F7, 13372, 'Chez les intellectuels', and 'Au sein de la classe ouvrière'; AN, F7, 13574, note of Paris, November 22, 1915, M/10.054, and note of Paris, December 6, 1915, M/10.076; AN, F7, 13575, note of 'Le Comité d'Action Internationale (October 6, 1916-December 22, 1916)'.
47. See the following: AN, F7, 13371, 'La CGT et la Paix' (dossier no. 3.11), p. 5; AN, F7, 13372, 'Au sein de la classe ouvrière', p. 9, and 'Chez les Intellectuels', pp. 8-11; AN, F7, 13575, note of Paris, March 27, 1916, and note of Paris, March 28, 1916; APP, B/A 1535, note of Paris, November 6, 1915 (dossier no. 7); Raoul Lenoir and Alphonse Merrheim, in *BS*, September 30, 1914, p. 1; Alphonse Merrheim, in *BS*, October 30, 1914, p. 1; and Alphonse Merrheim, 'La Réponse de Merrheim', in *La Vérité*, no. 234, August 1, 1918, p. 1. Finally, see AN, F7, 13575, for the newspaper clippings of November 11, 1917, and the note of December 26, 1917.
48. Madeleine Rebérioux, *La République radicale?, 1898-1914* (Paris, 1975), p. 44.
49. See the following: Rocher, *Lénine et le mouvement zimmerwaldien en France*, p. 22, and note no. 1, p. 22. AN, F7, 13372, 'Chez les Intellectuels', p. 11. FOM, PV, April 15, 1916; *Syndicats*, no. 136, May 17, 1939, p. 2, where his speech of 1921 is reprinted; and Alphonse Merrheim, 'Lettre ouverte à la Ligue des Droits de l'Homme', in *La Vérité*, no. 640, September 14, 1919, p. 1.
50. AN, F7, 13371, note of October 6, 1916 (dossier no. 3), and AN, 13574, note of December 20, 1915.
51. APP, B/A 1558, note of Paris, February 9, 1916 (compte rendu, dossier no. 3).
52. AN, F7, 13574, note of Paris, December 30, 1915, M/10127.
53. APP, B/A 1559, note of Paris, November 22, 1915.
54. AN, F7, 13574, note of Paris, December 30, 1915, M/10.127.
55. APP, B/A 1558, note of Paris, November 22, 1915 (dossier no. 3).

56. *Ibid.*, note of January 20, 1916 (dossier no. 3).
57. AN, F7,13371, note of October 6, 1916 (dossier no. 3).
58. See AN, F7, 12911, 'Comité pour la reprise...Aux Organisations socialistes et syndicalistes. A' Leur Militants'; AN, F7, 13575, note of Tarbes, March 24, 1916; and APP, B/A 1558 (for the brochure, n.d.).
59. APP, B/A 1558, note of April 11, 1916.
60. APP, B/A 1558, note of Paris, April 4, 1916 (dossier no. 3); AN, F7, 13069, note of Paris, April 4, 1916 (dossier no. 4); see also APP, B/A 1558, note of Paris, April 7, 1916 (dossier no. 3).
61. APP, B/A 1558, note of Paris, August 4, 1916 (dossier no. 3); AN, F7, 13371, note of October 6, 1916.
62. APP, B/A 1558, note of Paris, August 11, 1916 (dossier no. 3), and AN, F7, 13371, note of October 6, 1916 (dossier no. 3).
63. This information is only in AN, F7, 13371, note of October 6, 1916 (dossier no. 3).
64. For both the police report and the source of Péricat's statement, see *ibid.*
65. AN, F7, 13575, note of Paris, November 21, 1916, M/10.826.
66. APP, B/A 1558, note of Paris, April 18, 1916 (dossier no. 3).
67. *Ibid.*
68. See AN, F7, 13575, note of March 28, 1916, and AN, F7, 13370, note of March 28, 1916. These are two identical reports in which the office of the Sûreté Générale informed all the prefects to watch out for Merrheim and Bourderon and to make it impossible for them to meet with groups of workers in general and also to refuse anyone a passport who wanted to contact any antiwar groups abroad.
69. See Fainsod, *International Communism and the World War*, p. 129.
70. For this meeting, see APP, B/A 1558, note of May 8, 1916 (dossier no. 3); see also the following where the same issue comes up: APP, B/A 1558, note of April 28, 1916 (dossier no. 3 – two reports with the same date).
71. AN, F7, 13371, note of October 6, 1916.
72. Comité pour la Reprise des Relations Internationales, *Les Socialistes de Zimmerwald et la guerre*, (Paris, 1916), pp. 28-29.
73. For the source of the quotation, see AN, F7, 13575, note of Paris, March 24, 1917; see also *ibid.*, note of Paris, April 4, 1917, M/11.196; and *ibid.*, note of Paris, April 13, 1917.
74. *Ibid.*, note of Paris, April 4, 1917, M/11.196; see also *ibid.*, note of Paris, April 13, 1917, which indicates that at the meeting Lorient, Broutchoux, and Péricat made up the extreme left, while Bourderon was a moderate and Merrheim occupied the center. The terms are the reporter's.
75. 'La Révolution russe et le devoir socialiste', Comité pour la Reprise des Relations Internationales, Paris, n.d., in AN, F7, 12911.
76. APP, B/A 1558, note of Paris, April 13, 1917.
77. AN, F7, 13272, note of April 30, 1917, and 'Pour le Premier Mai – Aux Organisations! Aux Militants!' Circular of the Federation of Metalworkers, found in AN, F7, 12911.
78. AN, F7, 13272, note of April 26, 1917.

Chapter 9

1. APP, B/A 1605, note of September 10, 1915 ('Notes rétrospectives sur les divisions intérieures du Comité Confédéral').
2. FOM, PV, September 14, 1914.
3. AN, F7, 13574, note of Paris, October 6, 1914, M.35; APP, B/A 1605, note of June, 1915 ('Note sur l'attitude de Merrheim'). For Merrheim as interim secretary-general, see AN, F7, 13574, note of Bordeaux, October 3, 1914, M/25.
4. FOM, PV, September 14, 1914.
5. Letter of Merrheim to Monatte, Paris, October 17, 1914, in Colette Chambelland and Jean Maitron, eds., *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* (Paris, 1968), p. 38.
6. This information is contained in a letter Merrheim wrote to Monatte explaining the events of September 1914. Letter of Merrheim to Monatte, Paris, September 29, 1914, in *ibid.*, pp. 35-38.
7. FOM, PV, December 2, 1914.
8. This episode is covered very well in the documents in Chambelland and Maitron, eds.,

Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme, pp. 45-85. See also Alfred Rosmer, *Le Mouvement ouvrier pendant la guerre. De l'Union Sacrée à Zimmerwald*, (Paris, 1936), vol.I, pp. 172-180; and Edouard Dolléans, *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier* (Paris, 1939; reprint ed., Paris, 1957), vol.II, pp. 226-227.

9. See the letter from the Federation of Metalworkers to the CGT's Confederal Committee, dated December 16, 1914; found in AN, F7, 13574. See also *ibid.*, note of March 1, 1915, M/9674, where some of this information is summarized.

10. Letter of Merrheim, written with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Federation of Metalworkers, to Jouhaux; found in *ibid.*, note of December 16, 1914.

11. *Ibid.*, note of Paris, February 8, 1915, M/9635. Merrheim's motion to this meeting is reprinted in Chambelland and Maitron, eds., *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme*, pp. 87-88. Other reports of this meeting are in AN, F7, 13574, note of Paris, February 8, 1915, M/9635; *ibid.*, note of Paris, February 23, 1915, M/9665. See also FOM, PV, February 10, 1915, where Merrheim reported on the meeting of February 7, to his federation, and AN, F7, 13574, note of Paris, March 1, 1915, M/9674, which reports on a meeting of the CGT's Confederal Committee where a debate took place on why Jouhaux accepted the invitation to go to London.

12. AN, F7, 13574, note of Paris, February 8, 1915, M/9635.

13. See Rosmer's letter to Monatte, dated February 9, 1915, in Chambelland and Maitron, eds., *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme*, pp. 104-107.

14. See Rosmer's letter to Monatte, dated February 12, 1915, in *ibid.*, pp. 107-109.

15. FOM, PV, February 10, 1915.

16. Quoted by Merle Fainsod, *International Socialism and the World War* (Cambridge, [Mass.], 1935; reprint ed., Garden City, 1968), p. 54.

17. Letter of Rosmer to Monatte, February 24, 1915, in Chambelland and Maitron, eds., *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme*, pp. 112-116.

18. Rosmer, *Le Mouvement ouvrier pendant la guerre*, vol.I, p. 214.

19. Letter of Merrheim to Monatte, Paris, February 23, 1915, in Chambelland and Maitron, eds., *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme*, pp. 95-99.

20. Rosmer, *Le Mouvement ouvrier pendant la guerre*, vol.I, pp. 198-199, and Alphonse Merrheim's report to the Federation of Teachers, in *Procès-verbaux des séances du Conseil Fédéral de la Fédération des Instituteurs*, typed, IFHS, p. 47.

21. Quoted by Annie Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français, 1914-1920. Contribution à l'histoire du mouvement ouvrier français*, (Paris, The Hague, 1964), vol. I, p. 104.

22. The May 30 meeting is covered in AN, F7, 13574, note of May 31, 1915, M/9812. See also a short note about the meeting in *ibid.*, 13574, note of June 2, 1915, M/9813.

23. *Ibid.*, note of June 2, 1915, M/9813. Even with this concession, Merrheim continued his relentless attacks on Jouhaux. At an important meeting of the Confederal Committee on June 26, 1915, Merrheim read a blistering attack against Jouhaux's collaboration, a speech which left the latter very defensive and 'very pale'. For this information, see AN, F7, 13574, note of June 28, 1915, M/9858; and 'Pour la Fédération du Bâtiment', in *UM*, no. 62, May-December 1915, pp. 21-22. At the June 26 meeting Jouhaux asked the committee to authorize him to cease his collaboration if it thought it inappropriate. The committee, however, gave the secretary-general a vote of confidence.

24. See Merrheim's letter of Paris, July 30, 1915, to Monatte, in Chambelland and Maitron, eds., *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme*, pp. 140-143.

25. FOM, PV, August 14, 1915.

26. 'Conférence confédérale du 15 août 1915', in *UM*, no. 62, May-December, 1915, pp. 16-17. For a brief account, see AN, 13574, note of August 16, 1915, M/9913.

27. For Jouhaux's position, see APP, B/A 1605, note of July 15, 1915 ('Note sur l'attitude de la CGT et des organisations du département de la Seine depuis le 1er avril 1915', 30 pp.).

28. 'Conférence confédérale du 15 août 1915', in *UM*, no. 62, May-December, 1915, p. 17.

29. AN, F7, 13574, note of September 6, 1915, M/9938.

30. See Robert Brécy, *Le Mouvement syndical en France* (Paris, The Hague, 1963), p. 92.

31. Fainsod, *International Socialism and the World War*, p. 129.

32. Brécy, *Le Mouvement syndical en France*, p. 94, and AN, F7, 13272, note of Paris, May 1, 1916, M/10372.

33. AN, F7, 13575, note of Paris, March 6, 1916, M/10255; for a copy of the brochure, see *ibid.*, note of Paris, March 27, 1916, M/10292.

34. Quoted by Jean Charles, 'Le Temps des scissions', in *Histoire du réformisme en France depuis 1920*, ed. by Daniel Blume et al., vol. I (Paris, 1976), p. 12.

35. AN, F7, 13575, note of Paris, March 13, 1916; *ibid.*, note of Paris, March 13, 1916, M/10264, and FOM, PV, April 1, 1916.
36. AN, F7, 13569, note of Paris, November 28, 1916.
37. APP, B/A 1558, note of December 22, 1916.
38. 'Conférence des Fédérations Corporatives, des Unions de Syndicats, des Bourses du Travail', in *La Bataille*, no. 418 (December 24) -no. 420 (December 26, 1916).
39. *La Bataille*, no. 420, December 26, 1916, p. 1.
40. The text of the resolution is in AN, F7, 13372, 'Au Sein de la classe ouvrière', p. 29, and in CGT, *La CGT et le mouvement syndical* (Paris, 1925), p. 152.
41. Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français*, vol. I, p. 194; Jean Maxe, *De Zimmerwald au bolshévisme. Le Triomphe du marxisme pangermaniste* (Paris, 1920), note no. 2, p. 121.
42. CGT, *Conférence extraordinaire [de] Clermont-Ferrand* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1917). See p. 155 for the resolution this conference passed.
43. An important source of this information are the Merrheim letters. A microfilm of the entire collection, referred to in this book as 'Merrheim Letters', is in the Institut de Recherche Marxiste (IRM) [formally the Institut Maurice Thorez], Paris. For an important study based upon the Merrheim letters, see Victor Daline, 'Alphonse Merrheim et sa 'correspondance confidentielle'' (Moscow, 1965; French edition, in *Hommes et idées*, pp. 232-342, translated by Robert Rodov, Moscow, 1983).
44. FOM, PV, April 3, 1915.
45. *Ibid.*, July 24, 1915.
46. A rich source for information on the situation in the Loire Valley is AN, F7, 12994. For some of the political demands being made during the strikes, see notes of Saint-Etienne, January 26, 1918, no. L.646; Saint-Julien-Molin-Molette, January 26, 1918; Firming, January 27, 1918; Saint-Etienne, January 30, 1918, no. 1815; and Roanne, March 8, 1918. For an excellent general description of these events, see Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français*, vol. I, pp. 209-213, and also G. and M. Raffaelli, *Introduction bibliographique et méthodologique à l'histoire du département de la Loire, 1914-1918. Le Mouvement ouvrier contre la guerre*, University of Paris X (Nanterre), mémoire de maîtrise, 1969, 367 pp.
47. APP, B/A 1357, note of September 24, 1917 (no. 77); and note of September 27, 1917 (nos. 86, 91, and 93), and dossier no. 2, note of Paris, November 14, 1917. Kriegel also notes that Albert Thomas picked a syndicalist delegation including Merrheim and Jouhaux to examine the general situation in war plants that was leading to industrial unrest; see Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français*, vol. I, p. 159.
48. Merrheim's testimony is in the journal *Syndicats*, no. 135, May 10, 1935, p. 2, and is presented by René de Marmande; an even fuller account, because it also includes Jouhaux's testimony to the same group, is in CGT, *La Leçon des faits. La Délégation confédérale devant les parlementaires de gauche* (Paris, 1918), pp. 4-19.
49. FOM, PV, June 11, 1918.
50. 'A l'Union des mécaniciens de la Seine', in *UM*, no. 62, May-December, 1915, p. 15.
51. AN, F7, 13574, note of Bordeaux, October 9, 1914 (to which is attached the note of Paris, October 6, M/35).
52. *Ibid.*, note of Paris, February 4, 1915, M/9621.
53. AN, F7, 13272, note of April, 1916.
54. AN, F7, 13574, note of Paris, February 4, 1915, M/9621.
55. 'A l'Union des mécaniciens de la Seine', in *UM*, no. 62, May-December, 1915, p. 14.
56. *Ibid.*
57. Letter from Merrheim to the Comité d'Action, Paris, September 15, 1914, in the Merrheim Letters, IRM, no. 140.
58. AN, F7, 13574, note of Paris, April 6, 1915, M/18724.
59. Letter from Merrheim to the military governor of Paris, Paris, October 23, 1914, in the Merrheim Letters, IRM, no. 146.
60. Letter of Merrheim to Monsieur P. Douner, chef de Cabinet du Gouverneur Militaire de la Place de Paris, November 12, 1914, in the Merrheim Letters, IRM, no. 150.
61. See 'A l'Union des Mécaniciens de la Seine', in *UM*, no. 62, May-December, 1915, p. 14, and 'l'Action Fédérale', in *UM*, no. 62, May-December, 1915, p. 3.
62. Letter from Merrheim to Thomas, dated Paris, October 29, 1914, in the Guesde Archives, no. 45716, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam; this letter is not included in Horst Lademacher's *Die Zimmerwalder Bewegung. Portokolle und Korrespondenz*, 2 vols. (The Hague, Paris, 1967).

63. For a few highlights of their cooperation, see the following: AN, F7, 13574, note of Paris, July 3, 1915, M/9865, and note of February 13, 1917; APP, B/A, note of January 5, 1917, and note of September 14, 1915; also see the letter of Eugens Kernst to Merrheim, dated Saint Mans, September 14, 1914, and the letter of Merrheim to Albert Thomas, dated October 27, 1914, both in the Merrheim Letters, IRM.
64. See the many letters on this case in the Merrheim Letters, IRM, from December 1914 to February 1915. See also Thierry Flammant, *L'Ecole émancipée. Une Contre-culture de la Belle Epoque* (Treignac, 1982), pp. 241-242, and p. 383.
65. Letter from Franco Caiti to Merrheim, dated Romilly, November 23, 1914, in the Merrheim Letters, IRM.
66. Hyacinthe Dubreuil, *J'ai fini ma journée* (Paris, 1971), pp. 185-189.
67. FOM, PV, June 5 1915; and PV, June 19, 1915.
68. Dubreuil, *J'ai fini ma journée*, p. 185.
69. Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français*, vol. I, p. 228; AN, F7, 13575, note of Paris, November 26, 1917, P/11838.
70. Henry Maunoury, *Police de guerre, 1914-1919* (Paris, 1937), p. 99.
71. APP, B/A 1558, note of Paris, December 14, 1917, and Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français*, vol. I, note no. 1, p. 228.
72. Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français*, vol. I, pp. 228.
73. FOM, PV, February 2, 1918.
74. AN, F7, 13575, note of Paris, March 27, 1916, M/10.291.
75. *Ibid.*, note of Paris, March 28, 1916. This is the second source of information on this matter, shorter than the immediately preceding note; the quote in this note, however, does not appear in the other account.
76. *Ibid.*, 'Le Comité d'Action Internationale', October 6, 1916, to December 22, 1916; and APP, B/A 1558, note of Paris, December 5, 1916.
77. APP, B/A 1535, note of Paris, September 14, 1915, 'Réunion du Comité Confédéral de la CGT', and AN, F7, 13575, note of Paris, September 21, 1916, M/10696.

Chapter 10

1. AN, F7, 13569, note of Paris, April 20, 1918.
2. Maurice Labi, *La Grande Division des travailleurs. Première Scission de la C.G.T. (1914-1921)* (Paris, 1964), pp. 94-95, and Robert Brécy, *Le Mouvement syndical en France. Essai bibliographique* (Paris, The Hague, 1963), pp. 102-103.
3. On March 25, 1918, Merrheim attended a congress of the Interdepartmental Committee of the Centre, which passed an order of the day calling for a CGT congress. See Labi, *La Grande Division des travailleurs*, pp. 92-93.
4. AN, F7, 13576, note of Paris, March 14, 1918 (this note refers to the organization of the Comité de Défense et d' Action Républicaine), and Boris Souvarine, 'Une Ligue d'Action Républicaine', in *La Vérité*, no. 82, March 2, 1918, p. 1.
5. Accounts of this congress are in the following: AN, F7, 13771, note of Paris, July 11, 1918; there is also a summary in *UM*, September 1918 (found in AN, F7, 13771).
6. For this and what follows on this congress, see AN, F7, 13771, note of Paris, July 11, 1918 ('Fédération des Métaux, Congrès de 1918, compte rendu').
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. CGT, *XIXe Congrès national corporatif* (Paris, 1918). Merrheim's major speech is on pp. 189-216.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 261-262; for the vote, see p. 267, and pp. 271-300.
11. For a copy of the program see CGT, *La CGT et le mouvement syndical en France* (Paris, 1925), pp. 165-171; this book also reprints the CGT's address to Wilson, pp. 172-176, as well as many other resolutions of the CGT from its origins to 1925. See also Léon Jouhaux, *Le Syndicalisme et la CGT* (Paris, 1920), pp. 204-213, for a copy of this program.
12. See 'Le Comité confédérale national', in *VP*, no. 1, January, 1919, pp. 33-36.
13. Alphonse Merrheim, *La Révolution économique* (Paris, 1919), 34 pp.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-24.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 28. Merrheim conducted a spirited campaign in the syndicalist press in favor of Wilson. See the following for a flavor of his pro-Wilson sentiments: *La Vérité*, December 1918 (nos. 357, 358, 360, 361, 362, 364, 367, and 369). See also 'Commission administratif', in *VP*, no. 1, January, 1919, pp. 45-47.
22. Merrheim, *La Révolution économique* p. 29.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.
25. *Ibid.*
26. For a summary of the conference, see 'Conférence de Berne', in *VP*, no. 2, February 1919, pp. 81-103.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.
28. Resolutions are summarized throughout *ibid.*

Chapter 11

1. Annie Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français, 1914-1920. Contribution à l'histoire du mouvement ouvrier français*, (Paris, The Hague, 1964), vol. I, pp. 298-307.
2. Office du Travail, *Statistiques des Grèves*, 1914, p. VI.
3. *Ibid.*, 1913, p. VI.
4. *Ibid.*, 1915-1918, pp. V-VI.
5. *Ibid.*, 1919, p. V.
6. Included here are only the figures for the Travail des Métaux Ordinaires. See Office du Travail, *Statistiques des Grèves*, 1919, pp. 186-239.
7. *Ibid.*, p. VI, and pp. 186-239.
8. It is interesting to compare Merrheim's style of leadership in this strike with the manner in which he conducted the strike of Hennebont.
9. For a complete list of demands, see APP, B/A 1386, note of Paris, May 31, 1919 (dossier a).
10. *UM*, no. 73, June-July, 1919, p. 3; for the contract, see pp. 2-3.
11. APP, B/A 1386, note of May 31, 1919, no. 402 (dossier a). This is a different and more complete note than note no. 9.
12. *Ibid.*
13. For the agreement to the strike, see APP, B/A 1386, note of June 2, 1919, 'Grève des ouvriers métallurgistes de la région parisienne'. For the strike itself, see *ibid.*, and *ibid.*, note of June 3, 1919, 'Grève de la Métallurgie. Voiture et Aviation; Récapitulation'.
14. *Ibid.*, note of June 2, 1919, 'Réunion des ouvriers et ouvrières sur métaux'.
15. *Ibid.*, note of Paris, June 2, 1919, 'Réunion des ouvriers métallurgistes – compte rendu'.
16. *Ibid.*, June 2, 1919, 'Réunion de l'Union des Ouvriers Mécaniciens de la Seine'. For the industrialists' view see *ibid.*, June 2, 1919, 'Grèves des ouvriers métallurgistes de la région parisienne'.
17. *Ibid.*, note of June 2, 1919, 'Réunion des grévistes de la métallurgie de Saint-Denis'.
18. A small biographical note in the Paris Police Archives indicates that Bestel was a member of the Section de Saint-Denis de la Fédération Socialiste de la Seine, a collaborator on the journal *L'Emancipation*, a Socialist weekly published in Saint-Denis, and also affiliated with the Union Corporative des Ouvriers Mécaniciens de la Seine. The reporter offered this opinion about him: 'Very intelligent, energetic, with an easy manner of speaking; he enjoys a certain popularity among the pacifist element of Saint-Denis and around the municipality of this region'. See APP, B/A 1386, note of June 4, 1919 (dossier c).
19. *UM*, no. 73, June-July, 1919, p. 7.
20. A brief biographical note on Philippe may be found in APP, B/A 1386, note of June 4, 1919 (dossier c). See also, *ibid.*, note of June 2, 1919, 'Réunion des grévistes de la métallurgie de Saint-Denis'. (dossier a).
21. *Ibid.*, note of Paris, June 4, 1919.
22. *Ibid.*, note of June 5, 1919, 'Meeting en plein air des métallurgistes en grève de la région de Saint-Denis'. (dossier c).

23. AN, F7, 13576, note of Paris, May 21, 1919, P/3316, p. 2.
24. APP, B/A 1386, note of June 2, 1919, no. 402 (dossier a).
25. *Ibid.*, note of June 3, 1919.
26. *Ibid.*, note of Paris, June 5, 1919, 'Réunion des grévistes métallurgistes des Maisons 'Citroën' et 'Mars'.
27. *Ibid.*, June 12, 1919, 'Meeting des ouvriers et ouvrières en grève de Levallois'.
28. AN, F7, 12994, note of Montbrison, June 14, 1919.
29. APP, B/A 1386, note of Paris, June 12, 1919, 'Meeting des grévistes métallurgistes de l'Est de Paris' (dossier b).
30. *Ibid.*, June 11, 1919, 'Meeting en plein air des grévistes métallurgistes du 13eme Arrondissement'.
31. *Ibid.*, June 5, 1919, 'Réunion des grévistes de la métallurgie'.
32. *Ibid.*, June 11, 1919, 'Grève de la Métallurgie'.
33. *Ibid.*, June 5, 1919, 'Réunion des grévistes de la métallurgie de la Voiture et de l'Aviation'.
34. *Ibid.*, note of June 8, 1919, 'Réunion du Comité d'Entente de la Métallurgie'.
35. APP, B/A 1386, note of Paris, June 4, 1919.
36. *Ibid.*, June 8, 1919.
37. *Ibid.*, June 9, 1919.
38. *Ibid.*, note of June 15, 1919, 'Réunion des métallurgistes en grève du 15eme arrondissement'.
39. *Ibid.*, note of June 17, 1919, 'Réunion des grévistes des Maisons Nil Melior, Vedovelli, Paz et Silva'.
40. *Ibid.*, note of June 24, 1919, 'Réunion du Comité d'Action de grève de la Métallurgie et de la Voiture-Aviation'.
41. *Ibid.*, note of June 23, 1919, 'Réunion générale des ouvriers sur métaux'.
42. For their position concerning this strike, see *UM*, no. 73, June-July, 1919, 12 pp; this was a special issue of the journal devoted exclusively to the strike movement. See also FOM, *Congrès extraordinaire* (Lyon, 1919); despite the title this was only the moral report and it dealt mostly with the CGT's July 21 strike and the 1919 metalworkers' strike. Finally, see FOM, PV, May 9, May 23, June 4, 11, 19, and 21, 1919.
43. FOM, PV, June 4, 1919.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*
47. AN, F7, 13576, note of June 6, 1919.
48. *Ibid.*, note of Paris, July 2, 1919 ('Réunion de la Commission Administratif Fédérale').
49. FOM, PV, June 4, 1919.
50. AN, F7, 13576, note of Paris, June 26, 1919, p.2523.
51. *Ibid.*
52. For a brief but excellent account of this movement in France, see Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français*, vol. 1, pp. 301-303. Merrheim reported on this movement to his federation; see FOM, *Congrès extraordinaire* (Lyon, 1919). See also the interesting discussion of this question at the meeting of the Administrative Commission of the CGT on July 3, 1919, in APP, B/A 1406, note of July 5, 1919.
53. Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français*, vol. 1, pp. 301-303.
54. APP, B/A 1386, note of June 29, 1919 (dossier a).
55. Jean-Paul Brunet, *Saint-Denis, la ville rouge. Socialisme et communisme en banlieue ouvrière, 1890-1939* (Paris, 1980), pp. 210-232 (for Brunet's discussion of the June strike movement)
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 216-217.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 216-218.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 213.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
62. APP, B/A 1386, note of June 10, 1919 ('Réunion générale des ouvriers mouleurs sur métaux en grève').
63. *Ibid.*, note of June 19, 1919 ('Meeting des métallurgistes du XVIIIe arrondissement').
64. *Ibid.*, note of Paris, June 22, 1919 (Réunion du Conseil national de la Fédération des Métaux').

65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*, June 28, 1919 ('Meeting des ouvriers métallurgistes de la région parisienne').
67. *Ibid.*
68. AN, F7, 12786, note of Hennebont, August 12, 1906. Also see chapter 3 of this book.
69. See the procès-verbeaux of the third Congrès national des Métaux of July, 1918, is in AN, F7, 13771, note of July 11, 1918.

Chapter 12

1. FOM, *Congrès extraordinaire* (Lyon, 1919), pp. 13-19.
2. CGT, *XXe Congrès national corporatif* (Lyon, 1919), pp. 38- 49.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 121-128.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-54.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 169-201.
7. See Robert Brécy, *Le Mouvement syndical en France, 1871- 1921. Essai bibliographique* (Paris, The Hague, 1963), pp. 106-108, and note no. 3, p. 108. For general summaries of the momentous events of the year 1919 to Merrheim's death in 1925, see Edouard Dolléans, *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier* (Paris, 1939; reprint ed., Paris, 1957), vol. II, pp. 282- 351; Georges Lefranc, *Le Mouvement syndical sous la Troisième République* (Paris, 1967), pp. 213-304. The definitive study of this period still remains Annie Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français, 1914-1920. Contribution à l'histoire du mouvement ouvrier français*, Paris, 1964), vols. I and II.
8. Alphonse Merrheim, in *La Vérité*, no. 419, February 3, 1919, pp. 1-2. Concerning the same issue, see the following articles by Merrheim in *La Vérité*: no. 427, February 10, 1919, pp. 1-2, and no. 438, February 22, 1919, p. 1.
9. Merrheim, in *La Vérité*, no. 482, April 7, 1919, pp. 1-2.
10. See Maurice Labi, *La Grande Division des travailleurs. Première Scission de la C.G.T. (1914-1921)* (Paris, 1964), pp. 157 ff, and Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français*, vol. II, pp. 359-547.
11. CGT, *XXIe Congrès national corporatif* (Orléans, 1920), p. 280.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 349-350 and pp. 356-360.
13. See these two journals from the summer of 1920 on; Merrheim wrote for them very frequently during this period.
14. CGT, *XXIe Congrès national corporatif* (Orléans, 1920), pp. 360-361.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 367-374.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 367-371, and pp. 374-375.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 363-367.
18. CGT, *XXe Congrès national corporatif* (Lyon, 1919), p. 263, and pp. 293-302.
19. CGT, *XXIe Congrès national corporatif* (Orléans, 1920), pp. 420 and p. 428.
20. CGT, *XXIIe Congrès national corporatif* (Lille, 1921), p. 152.
21. Alphonse Merrheim, *Amsterdam ou Moscou? Le Syndicalisme en danger* (Paris, 1921), and Alphonse Merrheim, Preface to *Le Mirage du soviétisme*, by Max Hoschiller (Paris, 1921), pp. 7-28.
22. Alphonse Merrheim in Max Hoschiller, *Le Mirage du soviétisme*, (Paris, 1921), p. 21.
23. Merrheim, *Amsterdam ou Moscou?*, p. 3.
24. Labi, *La Grande Division des travailleurs*, pp. 265-268.
25. FOM, *VIe Congrès fédéral* (Paris, 1923), pp. 69-71, pp. 81-83, and pp. 299-303.
26. FOM, *VIIIe Congrès fédéral* (Paris, 1927), p. 9.
27. Letter of Marie Guillot to Pierre Monatte, January 28, 1918, in Colette Chambelland and Jean Maitron, eds., *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme. Les Archives de Pierre Monatte* (Paris, 1968), p. 253. For a discussion of Guillot, see Jean-William Dereymez and Léon Griveau, 'Marie Guillot et le syndicat des instituteurs de Saône-et-Loire (premier tiers du XXe siècle). Une Document inédit', in *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 127, April-June 1984, pp. 89-109.
28. Pierre Monatte, 'Alphonse Merrheim', in *La Révolution Prolétarienne*, no. 11, November, 1925, pp. 11-12.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARCHIVES

- I Archives Nationales, Paris.
 - A. The F7 series of the Ministry of the Interior is exceptionally important, and contains posters, tracts, press clippings, and confidential police reports.
 - B. The Fonds Albert Thomas (94 AP) contain important information on the Comité des Forges and the problem of munitions during World War I.
- II Archives de la Préfecture de Police, Paris.
The B/A series contains the same type of valuable material as the F7 series of the Archives Nationales.
- III Archives Départementales. Meurthe-et-Moselle (Nancy). Série M (Police). Relations internationales étrangers. This series, from carton 4 M 136 to 4 M 171, inclusive, contains important information on Italians and other foreigners in the Meurthe-et-Moselle from 1807 to 1939.
- IV Centre de Documentation de la CGT, Paris.
The Centre possesses the minutes of the Executive Committee of the Section des Bourses du Travail from August 14, 1908 to April 11, 1913, and from September 12, 1913 to July 17, 1914.
- V Institut Français d'Histoire Sociale, Paris.
The Institut houses the 'Procès-verbaux de la Commission Executive' of the Federation of Metalworkers (January 26 to November 12, 1919); the 'Procès-verbaux des séances du Conseil Fédéral de la Fédération des Instituteurs' (from October 22, 1913 to October 11, 1917); and the Monatte Archives. The latter consists mostly of letters by the major syndicalists, Merrheim included, to Monatte, and is especially rich for the war years. Colette Chambelland and Jean Maitron have edited most of these letters (see the last section of the bibliography).
- VI Institut de Recherche Marxiste, Paris [formerly the Institut Maurice Thorez]. This depository contains a one-reel microfilm of the Merrheim letters, cited in this book as the 'Merrheim Letters', which are housed in the Marxist-Leninist Institute, Moscow. The letters span the years 1909 to 1922. The largest part of this collection covers the years 1914-1915.
- VII Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam. Here are found the Grimm Archives which are essential for any work on the Zimmerwald movement. Horst Lademacher has prepared a printed edition of these archives (see the last section of the bibliography).
- VIII Ville de la Madeleine, Nord, Archives de l'Etat Civil. This depository contains the birth certificate of Alphonse Merrheim.
Unfortunately the Archives Départementales du Nord in Lille contain no information on Merrheim.

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICAL PRESS

Newspapers and periodicals in which articles by Merrheim regularly appeared, or which have information used in this book on the workers' movement, appear below. Within the parenthesis are the place of publication and the dates relevant to this study.

- L'Action. Quotidienne. Anti-cléricale, républicain, socialiste* (Paris, 1906).
L'Action Directe. Organe hebdomadaire paraissant le mercredi (Paris, January 15 – October 3, 1908).
L'Avant-garde. Socialiste, syndicaliste, révolutionnaire (Paris, 1905-1906).
L'Atelier. Hebdomadaire syndicaliste (Paris, 1920-1921).
La Bataille. Organe quotidien syndicaliste (Paris, 1915-1920).
La Bataille Syndicaliste. Quotidien (Paris, 1911-1921).
Le Bonnet Rouge. Quotidien républicain du soir (Paris, 1913-1914).
Bulletin officiel de la Fédération nationale des ouvriers métallurgistes de France (Paris, 1891-1901).
Bulletin de la Commission socialiste internationale (Zimmerwaldian; Paris, 1915-1917).
Le Cri du Peuple (Paris, 1883-1896).
Le Cri Populaire. Organe de Révolution Sociale. (Meurthe-et-Moselle, 1904-1908).
Le Cuivre. Organe officiel de la Fédération nationale des Syndicats du Cuivre et similaires (Lyon, 1894-1903).
La Guerre Sociale. Organe hebdomadaire (Paris, 1907-1914).
Les Hommes du Jour. Annales politiques, sociales, littéraires et artistiques (Paris, 1917).
L'Humanité. Journal socialist (Paris, 1906).
L'Information Ouvrière et Sociale. Action syndical, organisation du travail, évolution économique (Paris, 1918- 1921).
Le Métallurgiste. Organe des chambres syndicales ouvrières de la métallurgie (Lille, 1882-1883).
Le Mouvement Socialiste. Revue bimensuelle internationale [then Revue de critique sociale, littéraire et artistique] (Paris, 1905-1914).
Le Nouvelliste de Morbihan (Morbihan, 1906).
L'Ouvrier Métallurgiste. Organe officiel de l'Union Fédérale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de France (Paris, 1902-1909).
Pages Libres (Paris, 1904-1909).
L'Union des Métaux. Organe de la Fédération des Ouvriers des Métaux et similaires de France (Paris, 1915-1918).
Le Réveil de l'arrondissement de Briey. Organe hebdomadaire de défense des intérêts ouvriers (Meurthe-et-Moselle, 1905-1906).
La Révolution (Paris, Februar 1- March 28, 1909).
Le Syndicaliste. Organe de l'Union des syndicats ouvriers de Meurthe-et-Moselle (1907-1914).
Syndicats. Hebdomadaire du monde du travail (Paris, 1939).
Le Temps. Journal quotidien politique et littéraire (Paris, 1906).
Travailleur Socialiste (Meurthe-et-Moselle, 1907, 1909-1911, 1913).
La Vague. Hebdomadaire de combat, socialiste, féministe (Paris, 1918-1923).
La Vérité. Journal quotidien démocrate (Paris, 1917-1919).
La Vie Ouvrière. Revue syndicaliste bimensuelle (Paris, 1909-1914).
La Vie Sociale de l'arrondissement de Briey (Meurthe-et-Moselle, 1905-1906).
La Vie Sociale de Meurthe-et Moselle. Organe hebdomadaire de défense des intérêts ouvriers (Meurthe-et Moselle, 1907- 1908; this journal is a continuation of the above).

La Voix du Peuple. Organe de la Confédération Générale du Travail (Paris, 1902-1914).

Voix Sociale (Meurthe-et-Moselle, 1908).

STATISTICAL INFORMATION.

The following works were issued by the Office du Travail (later the Direction du Travail).

Les Association professionnelles ouvrières, 4 vols. (Paris, 1889-1904).

Annuaire des syndicats professionnels (Paris, from 1890).

Bulletin de L'Office du Travail, vol. XIII (Paris, 1906).

Dénombrement des étrangers en France. Résultats statistiques (Paris, 1898).

Statistiques des grèves, 16 vols. (Paris, 1900-1919).

Statistiques générales de la France, Résultats statistiques du recensement générale de la population (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1901, 1906, 1911, 1921, 1926).

CONGRESSES AND CONFERENCES

In this section are the names of workers' organizations consulted for this study that regularly held congresses and conferences. Included, too, is the title under which the meeting may be found and within the parenthesis the time and place of the meeting or publication information.

I The Central Organizations

A. Congresses

La Fédération nationale des Bourses du Travail. *Congrès de la Fédération nationale des Bourses du Travail* [title changes slightly in 1898 and 1900] (Tours, September 1896; Toulouse, September 1897; Rennes, September 1898; Paris, September 1900; Nice, September 1901; Alger, September 1902.)

La Confédération Générale du Travail. *Congrès national corporatif* (Limoges, September 1895; Tours, September 1896; Toulouse, September 1897; Rennes, September-October 1898; Paris, September 1900; Lyon, September 1901; Montpellier, September 1902; Bourges, September 1904; Amiens, October 1906; Marseille, October 1908; Toulouse, October 1910; Le Havre, September 1912; Paris, July 1918; Lyon, September 1919; Orléans, September-October 1920; Lille, July 1921).

B. CGT Conferences

Conférence des Fédérations. Journées des 5 et 6 avril 1906 (n.d., n.p. [Paris, 1906]).

Compte rendu de la Conférence extraordinaire des Fédérations nationales et des Bourses du Travail ou Unions de Syndicats, tenue les 1er, 2 et 3 juin 1909,[...] Paris (Paris: Maison des Fédérations, n.d [1909]).

Compte rendu des travaux de la Conférence extraordinaire des Fédérations nationales et des Bourses du Travail ou Unions de Syndicats, tenue les 22, 23, et 24 juin 1911,[...] Paris (Paris: Maison des Fédérations, n.d. [1911])

- Conférence extraordinaire spéciale des Bourses du Travail, Unions et Fédérations, tenue le 1er octobre 1911, Maison des Fédérations [Paris]* (Paris: Maison des Fédérations, n.d.[1911]).
- Le Prolétariat contre la guerre et les trois ans* (Paris: Maison des Fédérations, n.d. [1913]). This publication contains the results of the CGT's Congrès extraordinaire, held in Paris, November 24-25, 1912.
- Conférence ordinaire des Fédérations nationales et des Bourses du Travail ou Unions de Syndicats, tenue les 13, 14 et 15 juillet 1913, [...] Paris* (Paris: Maison des Fédérations, 1914).
- Rapports des Comités et des Commissions pour l'exercice 1912-1914 présentés au XIXe Congrès corporatif [...] tenue à Grenoble du 14 au 19 septembre 1914* (Paris: Maison des Fédérations, n.d. [1914]). This congress never met, World War I having forced its cancellation.
- Conférence confédérale du 15 août 1915*, in *L'Union des Métaux*, no. 62, May-December, 1915, pp. 16-17.
- Conférence des Fédérations corporatives, des Unions de Syndicats, des Bourses du Travail*, in *La Bataille* (Paris, December 24-26, 1916), December 24 (no. 418) and 26(no.420), 1916.
- Compte rendu de la Conférence extraordinaire des Fédérations nationales, Bourses du Travail et Unions des Syndicats, tenue à Clermont-Ferrand, les 23, 24, 25 décembre 1917* (Paris: Maison des Fédérations, n.d. [1917]).
- Compte rendu sténographique de la première réunion du Comité Confédéral National tenue à Paris les 15 et 16 décembre 1918* (Villeneuve-Saint-Georges: L'Union Typographique, 1919).
- Compte rendu du Congrès unitaire extraordinaire, 22-24 décembre 1921 [Paris]*, in *L'Humanité*, December 23, 24, 15, 1921.

II Fédération du Cuivre

- 'Congrès du Cuivre' (Lyon, December 29-31, 1894), in *Le Cuivre*, no. 4, January 1895, pp. 2-3.
- 'Congrès du Cuivre' (Paris, September 8-10, 1900), in *Le Cuivre*, no. 74, October 1900, pp. 3-4.
- 'Congrès du Cuivre' (Lyon, September 19-21, 1902), in *Le Cuivre*, no. 98, October 1902, pp. 1-5.

III Fédération des Métallurgistes

- A. Fédération National des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de France (FNOM). Congresses of the FNOM are listed under the general heading *Compte rendu du [...] Congrès national*. Exceptions to this citation are the 1883 congress, which is found under the heading *Premier congrès national de la métallurgie de France*, and the 1899 congress, which is found under the heading *Rapport sur le congrès national de la métallurgie*. The place and date of these congresses are: Paris, October, 1883; Paris, November, 1892 [in *Bulletin officiel de la Fédération nationale des ouvriers métallurgistes de France*, no. 19, December 1892]; Saint-Etienne, July, 1894; Limoges, September, 1895; Toulouse, September, 1897; Rennes, September, 1898; Paris, November, 1899.
- B. Union Fédérale des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de France (UFOM). The first two congresses of the UFOM have the title *Compte rendu des travaux*

du [...] congrès national. The last three are listed under the title [...] *Congrès national des ouvriers métallurgistes*. The place and date of these congresses are: Paris, September 1900; Saint-Etienne, September 1901; Paris, September 1903; Paris, September 1905; Paris, September 1907.

'Congrès régional des Ouvriers Métallurgistes de la région du Nord [Lille, March 19, 1905]', in *L'Ouvrier Métallurgiste*, no. 162, May 1, 1905, p. 4. See no. 160, March 1, 1905, p. 1, of this journal for the agenda.

'Compte rendu du Congrès régional de l'Isère, de la Loire et du Rhône (Lyon, January 31-February 1, 1909', in *L'Ouvrier Métallurgiste*, no. 208, March 1, 1909, p. 4; no. 209, April 1, 1909, p. 4; and no. 210, May 1, 1909, p. 4.

- C. Fédération des Ouvriers des Métaux et Similaires de France (FOM). Titles of the congresses and reports of the FOM vary and are therefore listed separately.
Congrès Unitaire des Fédérations des Métallurgistes, des Mouleurs, et des Mécaniciens, tenu à Paris, les 28, 29, et 30 mai 1909 (Paris: Maison des Fédérations, n.d. [1909]).
Rapport moral, administratif, et financier de l'exercice du 1er juillet 1909 au 31 mai 1911 (Paris: Maison des Fédérations, n.d. [1911]).
Compte rendu des 1er et 2e congrès nationaux, tenus à Paris, Salle de l'Egalitaire; 1^o: 14, 15, 16 et 17 août 1911; 2^o: 8, 9, 10 et 11 septembre 1913 (Paris: Maison des Fédérations, n.d. [1913]).
A.N., F7, 13771, report of Paris, July 11, 1918. This report is a file of the 3e Congrès national, which met in Paris from July 10 to 13, 1918.
4e Congrès national, rapport moral et compte rendu du Congrès Extraordinaire, tenu [...] à Lyon, les 10, 11, 12 et 13 septembre 1919 (Paris: Maison des Syndicats, n.d. [1919]).
Ve Congrès national, tenu à Lille, les 20, 21, 22 et 23 juillet 1921 (Paris: Maison des Syndicats, n.d. [1921]).
VIe Congrès fédéral, tenu à Paris, les 11, 12 et 13 octobre 1923 (Versailles: Imprimerie coopérative La Gutenberg, 1924).
VIIe Congrès fédéral, tenu à Paris, les 23, 24 et 25 août 1925 (Versailles: Imprimerie coopérative La Gutenberg, 1925).
VIIIe Congrès fédéral, tenu à Paris, les 24 et 25 juillet 1927 (Versailles: Imprimerie coopérative La Gutenberg, 1927).
- D. The International Metalworkers' Federation. Congresses of this organization are listed under the heading *The [...] International Metalworkers' Congress*, followed by the date and place of the congress. Useful for this study were the congresses that met in the following cities: Brussels, August, 1907; Birmingham, October-November, 1910; Berlin, August, 1913; Copenhagen, August, 1920; Lucerne, August, 1921; Vienna, July, 1924; Paris, August, 1927.
- E. The Second International. Congresses of the Second International are listed under the general heading 'Congrès Socialiste International', preceded by the number of the congress, and followed by the place and date of the meeting. Useful for this study was the seventh congress held in Stuttgart in August, 1907; the eighth in Copenhagen in September, 1910, and the ninth in Basle in November, 1912.

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- Comité pour la reprise des relations internationales, *Les Socialistes de Zimmerwald et la guerre* (Paris: Imprimerie spéciale du Comité pour la reprise [...], 1916).
- Confédération Générale du Travail, *La Leçon des faits. La Délégation confédérale devant les parlementaires de gauche* (Paris: Imprimerie Nouvelle, 1918).
- Fédération des Ouvriers des Métaux [...], *Petit guide syndicale* (Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, l'Union Typographique, 1920). An outline of the connections of the local unions and the Federation of Metalworkers.
- — — — —, *Une Demande de contrôle ouvrier en France. Correspondance entre la Fédération des ouvriers des métaux et l'Union des industries métallurgiques et minières. Avant-projet de la Fédération* (Genève: Bureau International du Travail, 1921).

WRITINGS OF ALPHONSE MERRHEIM.

Unless otherwise indicated the articles are signed 'A. Merrheim'.

I Major journal or newspaper articles

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- 'Le Mouvement ouvrier dans le bassin de Longwy', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 168-169, December 1-15, 1905, pp. 425-482.
- 'Un Grand Conflit social. La Grève d'Hennebont', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 180, November, 1906, pt. I, pp. 194-218; pt. II, no. 181, December, 1906, pp. 347-379.
- 'La Crise de l'automobile', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, pt. I, no. 195, February 15, 1908, pp. 81-100; pt. II, no. 196, March 15, 1908, pp. 171-183.
- 'Enquête ouvrière sur la crise de l'apprentissage', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 198, May 15, 1908, pp. 327-338.
- 'L'Organisation patronale en France', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 200, July 15, 1908, pp. 5-25; no. 201, August 15, 1908, pp. 81-95; no. 202, September 15, 1908, pp. 178-197; no. 203, October 15, 1908, pp. 270-277; no. 204, November 15, 1908, pp. 339-362; no. 205, December 15, 1908, pp. 408-425; no. 209, April 1909, pp. 284-289; no. 211, June 1909, pp. 431-448; nos. 215-216, November-December 1909, pp. 321-346.
- 'Comment j'ai découvert l'Ouenza', in *La Révolution*, no. 4, February 4, 1909, p. 1.
- 'L'Affaire de l'Ouenza', in *La Révolution*, no. 25, February 25, 1909, p. 1; no. 26, February 26, 1909, p. 1; no. 27, February 27, 1909, p. 2; and no. 28, February 28, 1909, p. 1.
- 'Un Scandale capitaliste. L'Affaire de l'Ouenza', in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, no. 208, March 1909, pp. 178-205.
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